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## NOTES OF THE WEEK

THE Government has been taught a sharp lesson over the grant of £200,000 to the Civil Service sports grounds. Whether it has learned it has still to be seen. Governments with big majorities are often obstinate without being firm, but we hope in this case Mr. Baldwin will allow his native frankness and good sense full play. His followers in the House have made it very clear that they hate the grant; opinion in the country has endorsed their stand, and the Civil Service would much rather that the whole scheme were dropped. To compromise by way of a much-reduced grant, or by way of a loan instead of a grant is a solution that commends itself to those who are concerned to save the Cabinet's face. But in a matter of this kind there is much more prestige to be gained, and courage to be shown, by acknowledging a mistake than by any attempt to cover it up. The episode, whatever its upshot, has shown two things: first, that the rank and file of the party have enough spirit and independence to keep the

Government up to the mark; secondly, that there is among them a genuine desire for economy.

## BACK FROM THE LAND

Lieut.-Commander Hilton Young is the latest Liberal to find Mr. Lloyd George's land policy more than he can stand—the latest, one of the ablest, but not the last. There will be other secessionists before the boldest attempt yet made in our politics to foist both an issue and a solution upon a party is abandoned. The Liberals in conference have toned down a good deal of the crudity of the ex-Premier's original programme; but it remains essentially a Socialistic, bureaucratic remedy for the troubles of agriculture, and as such is not only an innovation on, but an inversion of, Liberal principles. Mr. Lloyd George's pretence that the controlled tenant on publicly owned land is the embodiment of traditional Liberalism is very lamely supported by the Small Holding Acts, which have notoriously failed. Nor is Lord Asquith's reminder that Liberalism must not only be the antithesis of Socialism but must provide an antidote much more to the point. Nationalizing the land and placing the use of it under official

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supervision, as Sir Alfred Mond and Lieut.-Commander Hilton Young have rightly seen, is Socialism.

#### SHORT WEIGHT AND MEASURE

Public opinion has been surprised and irritated by suggestions that legislation to give effect to the Food Council's findings is unnecessary or should be postponed till a Select Parliamentary Committee has looked into the matter. There is nothing for a Select Committee to investigate. The whole ground has been carefully traversed by the Food Council; and how, after the extent of the evil has been exposed, it can be contended that legislation is not necessary passes our understanding. However, it should be remembered that the success of stringent regulations will in some degree depend on the temper of the trades affected; and those who press for legislation might be more careful of the feelings of those tradesmen—of course, the great majority—who are blameless. It would appear that a certain brusqueness in the Food Council's methods has provoked the Federation of Grocers' Associations more than the definite proposals that body criticizes. But the Federation takes up an untenable position when it questions the qualifications of the Food Council. This bickering must not be allowed to delay reforms that are quite as much in the interests of the honest tradesman as of the consumer.

#### COAL FACTS AND FIGURES

Is there a single fact about the coal trade which everybody accepts as true? We know of none. It might be thought, for instance, a very easy as well as a very important matter to determine whether the subsidy has helped the export business. Yet the mine-owners, by taking last August as their starting-point, make out a gain of 1,360,000 tons by December; while the other side, comparing July with January, show a loss of 300,000 tons, and maintain that but for the fillip given by the strike in America it would have been over 100,000 tons more. As July was the last normal month before the crisis came to a head, it makes a surer standard of comparison than August, when all buyers were holding off. The conclusion therefore seems sound that the subsidy, though it has helped to reduce the price of coal by 1s. 8d. a ton, has not enabled us to recover our foreign trade. It follows from this that the equivalent of the subsidy in lower wages or longer hours would have proved equally ineffective. But whether our competitive price is too high or the market has been permanently restricted is a point on which only the Commission can pronounce with any definiteness.

#### THE PARTY MACHINE

Mr. Ben Spoor has been excommunicated from the I.L.P. because of some articles in which he has discussed the possibilities of political co-operation between Liberals and Labour. The incident is interesting, not because it reveals anything that was not already known about the relations between the two parties, but because it shows the tendency in our politics towards the American "machine." The pledge-bound, caucus-governed party, with "regularity" as its chief cement, is what Labour in particular inclines to. Quite possibly before another quarter of a century has gone

by we may find the whole monstrous mechanism of American politics reproduced over here, with district and county conventions, and the bosses to run them and platforms dictated by a junta of professionals, and the average Labour M.P., like the average voter, bound and helpless in the coils of "democracy."

#### THE CASE OF DR. AXHAM

The General Medical Council has now left its defenders without a shred of excuse for pretending that it was willing to act generously towards Dr. Axham and was deeply concerned by its powerlessness. One of Dr. Axham's qualifications has been restored to him. The condition of action by the General Medical Council has at long last been satisfied. And what does the Council do? It decides that a special meeting to redress the wrong is unnecessary. It sees no reason for haste, though well aware of Dr. Axham's age and feeble health. A new application, he is told, is necessary. It is apparently quite content to take the risk of finding that Dr. Axham has passed beyond the jurisdiction of the Council before his name is replaced on the register; and this in face of the strongest criticism from the public, and at a time when its own constitution and general mode of procedure are being almost everywhere called in question. We can see in this decision of the Council nothing but sullen defiance of public opinion. Well, this is a country in which public opinion always ultimately prevails, and it will not be too lenient, when reform is undertaken, towards a body which has so persisted in opposition to it.

#### AN ENGLISH HOLLYWOOD?

In certain quarters there seems great satisfaction at the prospect of foreign, which here means American, film producers establishing themselves in England in consequence of whatever restrictions may eventually be placed on the importation of films. But there is only a very imperfect analogy between film-production and, say, the production here of foreign motor-cars. Would a miniature Hollywood set up in England, under American auspices and with American money, give scope to British film actors? Would it give us films really suited to British taste, where that still survives? If the result were merely the transfer of essentially American enterprises from the United States to England, very little indeed would be gained. What are wanted are films which shall be British through and through, expressive of the mind of this people and unlikely to fill young heads with un-English ideas of social conduct. So far from welcoming foreign producers who propose to set up here, we ought to have an Ellis Island for them.

#### CLEVER TACTICS

Many conflicting verdicts have been passed upon M. Briand in his time, but opponents and supporters have united in declaring him to be an extremely clever parliamentarian. He is now once more proving himself worthy of his reputation. By taking the Finance Bill out of the hands of the Chamber he has given the Deputies time to think things over, and their thoughts must be so depressing that they will probably adopt the Bill, tax on payments and all, when it comes back to them. Should they not do so, they will be faced with a constitutional dispute with the Senate,

which will adopt the tax on payments; they will be faced with the responsibility for overthrowing the Government just before the most important Council meeting the League has held; they will be faced with a sensational collapse of the franc; and, lastly, they will be faced with the knowledge that sooner or later they will win even greater unpopularity by being forced to vote in favour of much more drastic taxation.

#### FRANCE AND RUSSIA

It is not in Moscow alone that there are diplomats ready to exploit the alleged hostility of the British Government to Russia. There is quite a possibility that the Franco-Russian debt negotiations which are just beginning in Paris may lead to a settlement, for many Frenchmen would be willing to accept terms favourable to Moscow, provided Moscow will in turn play their political game. The argument is briefly this: by bringing Germany into the League Great Britain will win her over to her own anti-Russian policy, and, consequently, France and Russia should combine against this Anglo-German bloc. The fact that the Anglo-German bloc does not exist—and, even if it did exist, would not be necessarily hostile to France or Russia—does not do away with the danger of some close understanding between Moscow and Paris designed to counteract the Russo-German Treaty of Rapallo. A Franco-Russian understanding of this sort would be perilously like the Franco-Russian understanding before 1914, and might lead to the same results.

#### A HUNGARIAN PUTSCH

When the news of the Hungarian bank-note forgeries first leaked out, Count Bethlen, the Prime Minister, acted with an energy which rather surprised those who knew him, and which led one to hope that at last he would be able to put an end to all these plotters who, despite their very doubtful methods, had won such power in Hungary because of their alleged patriotic aims. Unfortunately there are indications that the various Nationalist organizations he would like to suppress are stronger than he is, and, even in the Parliamentary Commission which was appointed to investigate the conspiracy, there has been much chicanery and much pressure brought against those members of the Opposition who wish to produce a minority report. Every Monarchist appears to be fishing in the troubled waters, and there are new rumours of a *Putsch* to overthrow the Government. If disorders are prevented, it will probably only be because the anglers are divided on the question of bait. Besides Prince Otto and Archduke Albrecht, there is even alleged to be an English candidate for the Hungarian throne.

#### LIBEL IN FICTION

We have the liveliest sympathy with the Bill designed to remove all risk at present incurred by a novelist whose creatures can be identified with actual persons he never heard of. That risk is not negligible. So distinguished a writer as Mr. George Moore has suffered the indignity of a suggestion that he was indulging in libel when he was simply exercising his imagination. It may, indeed, though somewhat insecurely, be guarded against by the preliminary declaration that all the characters in the novel are fictitious; but could

anything be more inartistic than this outrage against the illusion which it is the business of the novelist to create? And there is no other means of self-protection. Choice of improbable names will not avail. A writer of no consequence once chose, for safety and with doubts of its credibility, the surname Bacchus, only to find half a dozen entries under it in the directory—all of them, to judge from addresses, relating to people capable of being socially damaged by his innocent levity.

#### STAGE CENSORSHIP

There appears to be no industry to which titled people will not turn a hand in these days, and Lord Lathom has joined the ex-Attorney-General as a manufacturer of what are vaguely called sex-plays. He has put in the usual "true-to-life" defence, which was hardly necessary since nobody denies that the oldest profession in the world is still extant. But all this hullabaloo over the discovery that lechery continues seems rather crude conduct for a supposedly sophisticated age. Unfortunately, the more we get of this tedious "frankness," the more encouragement is given to the "reformers" who propose to make the L.C.C. and not the Lord Chamberlain the arbiter of taste and morals. This would create an intolerable situation. The dramatist and managers know where they stand at present, but with a democratic body of altering membership on top of them they would be the victims of constant intrigue by the busybodies seeking to get old verdicts reversed. The councillors, in their turn, would be continually prodded and persecuted by the Puritan fanatics. Anything is preferable to the risk of establishing Chadband and Podsnap as Jacks-in-office with the drama at their mercy. We do not suggest that Chadband and Podsnap are already members of the Council, but the "clean-the-stage" campaigners might do their best to elect them.

#### W. H. POLLOCK

Mr. Walter Herries Pollock, who has died thirty years after ceasing to be Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW, meant a great deal to the best type of literary journalist and nothing to the man in the street. It is even possible that he may be remembered chiefly for his command, not of the pen, but of the foil, for he took a great part in the revival of fencing, which he regarded as more than a physical recreation, feeling the poetry of it and deeming it an art singularly becoming to people of blood and culture. Yet he was a man with many gifts: he wrote English verse gracefully, French prose extraordinarily well, plays with a measure of success; he had wit, fancy, an entertaining acrimony towards certain kinds of his fellow creatures; and he was a very able Editor. Early failure of health, no doubt, supplies part of the explanation why he did not impress the general public. But it is not really the function of such men to achieve what people in general call success: their true business is to keep alive, and in their own persons to exemplify, the old English ideal of the amateur. They are not in the competition; but the best of the competitors look to them rather than to the undiscriminating rabble of spectators. Mr. Pollock contributed some particularly interesting reminiscences of the old "Saturday" to the Seventieth Anniversary Number of the SATURDAY REVIEW last November.

## SIR AUSTEN'S DILEMMA

ONE need not be very astute to realize that Sir Austen Chamberlain has got himself into considerable difficulties. Public opinion in this country is dead against a precipitate increase in the number of the Permanent Members of the League of Nations Council, and Sir Austen, on the other hand, is not only personally in favour of such an increase, but is likely to feel responsible for political difficulties of some magnitude in two or three European countries unless he can register a favourable British vote when the League Council deals with the matter in a week's time. The British Foreign Secretary has worked so consistently for better relationships between the countries of Europe that we may assume the present muddle disturbs him at least as much as it does us, and, although we frankly do not see how the crisis is to be happily solved, some examination of cause and effect may be worth while in the hope that similar muddles may be avoided in the future.

In a speech made at Birmingham on Tuesday last Sir Austen gave his reason for desiring a larger Council. He pointed out that this body, with the addition of Germany, would consist of eleven Members, and he asked whether eleven countries could speak the moral judgment of the world. He strengthened his case by pointing out that, in certain circumstances, more than half the Council's Members—presumably he referred to the signatories of the Locarno Treaties—would be excluded from voting and that very important decisions might thus have to be reached by a minority. It seemed to him that this was putting too great a strain upon their loyalty and faith. There may be something in this view, although, on the other hand, it is obvious that the larger the Council, the more difficult it will be to reach unanimity and to act with rapidity in the event of a crisis. But if the other Members of the League feel they cannot trust their interests to the eleven Members of the Council, they have only to say so at the Assembly and they may be sure that the Council will willingly alter its composition to meet their views. Already on one previous occasion the size of the Council has been increased to satisfy the wishes of the Assembly, and there is no reason at all why any further alterations that may be deemed necessary should not be made when the Assembly meets in the ordinary way next September. Such a procedure would give rise to no undignified intrigues and to no bitterness between nations.

But this is not how Sir Austen Chamberlain proposes to act. He would like to see the size of the Council increased so that it could act with less hesitation in the event of a dispute which robbed the signatories of the Locarno Treaties of their vote. The French have urged that Spain and Poland should be made Permanent Members of the Council. But Spain is already a Temporary Member and her change of status would, therefore, do nothing to meet Sir Austen's point, and Poland is a signatory of the Locarno Agreements, and would, therefore, be excluded from voting as would the majority of the other Members of the Council, should any dispute affecting Locarno arise. Why, then, should Sir Austen still be willing to support the claims of Spain or Poland,

despite the hostility of the people of this country, of the Dominions, of Germany, and of most of the smaller Members of the League? When the Temporary Members of the Council were elected last September, Brazil received forty-three votes while Poland received only two. Can it be pretended that a country which inspires so little confidence among other Members of the League is worthy to be picked out and raised to the rank of a Great Power with a permanent seat? The whole thing is so fantastic that we must look elsewhere for Sir Austen's reasons. He is much too shrewd a man to attach any importance to the argument that he produced at Birmingham, and we are only astonished that he should have thought that it would convince the British public.

The cause of the muddle, we imagine, is Sir Austen's desire not to offend anybody. He postpones unpleasant things, as other people postpone their visits to the dentist. Spain has long claimed a permanent seat, and it is not astonishing that she should have renewed her claim when a permanent seat was to be allotted to Germany. Sir Austen feels that this privilege should be accorded her, and, although British public opinion apparently does not agree with him, he is fully entitled to hold this view. But, when France claimed a permanent seat for Poland, he should have put his foot down. The matter, he appears to have felt, could be postponed, but he failed to foresee that any hesitation on his part would allow Paris and Warsaw to claim that their case was won. Time and again he has declared that the British Government has as yet reached no decision, but his very hesitation in face of such definite statements in France and Poland could only be interpreted as an encouragement to these two countries. Even now, when M. Briand comes out openly in support of Poland, Sir Austen Chamberlain still hides behind such unsound arguments as he used at Birmingham. It is this failure to be frank which has excited public opinion in every country and which will make it so difficult to avoid a much more serious crisis than any the League has yet faced.

As matters now stand, Sweden, frightened of seeing Poland elected to a permanent seat, has pledged herself to oppose the election of any country except Germany, but Spain resolutely demands that she should be placed among the Great Powers. Similarly, the silence of the British Government has so encouraged Poland that, unless she gets at least a temporary seat next month, her Government will be overthrown, and her papers are already talking of deserting the League and of making an alliance with Russia.

The British Government and the League Council are, therefore, faced by two difficult problems. There is a temporary issue—can agreement be reached without offending Spain, without overthrowing the Polish Government, and without convincing Germany that the League is a corrupt organization? There is also the permanent issue—will the League be strengthened or weakened by the addition of other Permanent Council Members besides Germany? The League has had plenty of practice in reaching compromises, and it is quite possible that, between now and March 8, some way out of the difficulty will have been found. We fear, however, that the politicians concerned will be so anxious to find this com-

promise, that they will pay very little attention to the ultimate strengthening or weakening of the League as a whole. It would be better to risk secessions from the League than to grant permanent seats next month to countries which have demanded them with threats and have tried to obtain them by intrigues. Spain has far more right than Poland to a permanent seat, but if an exception is to be made in her favour, the understanding that only Great Powers should be thus privileged will disappear, and there will be ceaseless conspiracies on the part of every country with ambitions. We have surely a right to demand that the Foreign Secretary should make known our policy on this important question frankly and without further delay.

### THE GLADSTONIAN SPIRIT

**T**HE opposition to the grant of £200,000 for Civil Service sports grounds is a very healthy symptom. It is healthy because it is instinctive and spontaneous. One of the problems and one of the difficulties of democracy is to get the average men and women interested in the day-to-day affairs of Government. But in this case there has been no trouble whatever. Without any prompting the common-sense of the country has unanimously and emphatically condemned the setting aside of a considerable sum of public money for the recreation of the employees of the State. That is not because our people distrust or fear or are jealous of the Civil Service. On the contrary, they admire it and recognize its worth. The objection taken to the proposed grant is altogether independent of the individual or the collective estimate of the Civil Service. It is based on a profound recognition of the need for economy—a recognition that in great part is the result of impassioned ministerial exhortations. The country, it would appear, has taken these exhortations seriously and means to hold their authors to them.

What we need more than anything else is a revival of the Gladstonian conscience in matters of public expenditure. Gladstone regarded the Chancellor of the Exchequer as "the trusted and confidential steward of the public," an officer "under a sacred obligation with regard to all that he consents to spend." It was his duty to uphold economy in detail; "and it is the mark of a chicken-hearted Chancellor when he shrinks from upholding economy in detail, when, because it is a question of only two or three thousand pounds, he says it is no matter. He is ridiculed, no doubt, for what is called candle-ends and cheese-parings, but he is not worth his salt if he is not ready to save what are meant by candle-ends and cheese-parings in the cause of the country." And Gladstone practised what he preached. "He did not think it beneath his dignity," says his biographer, "to appeal to the Foreign Office for a retrenchment in fly-leaves and thick folio sheets used for docketing only, and the same for mere covering despatches without description; for all these had to be bound, and the bound books wanted bookcases, and the bookcases wanted buildings, and the libraries wanted librarians." With that spirit in control of the Treasury, thrift was driven into every department of Government.

Gladstone's labours in defence of the public purse were Herculean. He fought and beat Palmerston, the most popular of Premiers, for two whole years over the issue of economy; and he carried the crusade so far as to restrict civil servants who were travelling on public business to the use of one label per portmanteau—the outward address to be written on one side and the return on the other. The sense never left him of the extravagance that might ensue if ministers and officials became slack and easy in little things.

Mr. Winston Churchill is not by temperament a Chancellor of this kidney. Few men are, with his avidity for the drama and pageantry of life and politics. Left to himself he is as little disposed as any of his colleagues to ask in regard to a given project not, Is this desirable? but, Can we afford it? What has converted him into a champion of economy is partly the Treasury atmosphere and partly an intelligent following up of the consequences of over-taxation through the multitudinous avenues of industry. It used to be said that the war taught us to think in millions. It was the last thing the war did to us or to any of the belligerents. It taught us to play in millions, to juggle with them, to squander them. But thought ceased in the presence of sums so huge as to be meaningless. It is only now that as a nation we are beginning to recapture some sense of the value of money, to appreciate the wholesomeness of Treasury control, and to bring the sprawling and spawning bureaucracy and the grandiose "reforms" of the war period and of the first few hectic years of peace to the touchstone of our ability to pay for them. Before the war we spent about 8% of the national income on Government and saved about 15%. To-day we are spending about 30% of the national income on Government and saving only 5%. Mr. Churchill has not only developed within himself but has imparted to the nation a realistic perception of the perils of such a situation. He has subdued himself to the recognition that nothing can be right with a country if its finances are wrong and if taxation reaches the point where it cripples industry and prevents the creation of new capital.

Mr. Churchill is under no illusions as to the difficulties of his task. The difference between a rhetorical zeal for economy and the zariba of protective sanctity which most M.P.'s and most groups contrive to throw round each pet specific extravagance, is something of which he has a full and caustic appreciation. It must, therefore, have heartened as well as surprised him to find, in the case of the Civil Service sports grant, that the House and the country have a more frugal mind than the Government itself, a juster perspective, and clearer notions of relative values. The Government in a thoughtless moment had committed itself to an act of expensive benevolence. Instantly it was hauled up by a revolt among its own followers in the House and by an irrepressible ferment in the country. It was reminded of its pledges to save the public money instead of wasting it. It was informed that to vote £200,000 for playing fields on behalf of the members of the Civil Service was an odd way of beginning a session consecrated to the cause of economy. What Mr. Churchill as a Cabinet Minister may have thought of the incident we will not attempt to surmise. But as Chancellor of the Exchequer it

can only have delighted and fortified him. To find himself urged and almost indeed coerced into leading the march towards the promised land of thrift and to encounter everywhere, except in the Cabinet, so many tokens of the survival of the Gladstonian spirit, must have been a rare and exhilarating experience.

### SPELLING REFORM

**A**PETITION signed by 15,000 people (some of whom ought to know better) has just been sent to the Prime Minister, urging him to appoint a Royal Commission to report on English spelling and how it might be simplified. Mr. Baldwin, being a sensible man with really important business on his hands, will appoint neither a Royal Commission nor a vulgar committee, which the petitioners suggest as a second-best plan. There is, in the first place, nothing to inquire into, for the arguments have been threshed out many a time and there can be no new facts to be unearthed. Secondly, if the Royal Commission did report, and the Government were to read its report, which is very unlikely, what is it suggested that they could do? They might, of course, if the report were against change, bring in a short Bill, making it treason-felony to tamper with the King's spelling. Or if the report were in favour of change we might in future be assessed for Inkum Tax under Shedul D, and all Government publications might be in the nu spelling. Or is the idea that the Board of Education should issue another circular making the teaching of the new spelling compulsory? Truly a nice beginning of the new policy of economy to make all the existing school books obsolete!

No Government can reform spelling. The only effectual propaganda for the new spelling is to print books in it. If people like the new spelling they will adopt it, and if they don't they won't. How else has the English language reached its present visual form? That method, however, involves risks. Will Honeycomb spelt like a gentleman, not like a scholar, and there is the risk if this suggested method of propaganda were adopted that its practitioners might be accused of spelling like cranks and not like gentlemen. There is, too, the financial risk of printing books in a spelling that no one will like and few will buy, which explains why the propaganda of a Royal Commission, for which the country would pay, is preferred. But is it not a singular piece of audacity in these hard times to try to get this sort of propaganda at the expense of the taxpayer?

All kinds of spelling reforms are proposed, from systems which make our language look like Anglo-Saxon or Erse to finicking changes such as dropping the mute final *e* (it is frequently, by the by, not mute at all but, as, for example, in the word "love," a displaced modification of the radical vowel, but that may pass) or of the *u* from words like honour and labour, or the changing of the past tense in *-ed* to *-d*. But in whose interest are we to make these changes, whether revolutionary or merely trivial and irritating? Sometimes we are told in the interests of logic. This logic burned the library at Alexandria and would burn all the books in the British

Museum. At least it would make them all unreadable a generation hence. Others plead the case of the child compelled to waste his time in mastering the eccentricities of English spelling. As though education were not sufficiently cursed already with this passion for making things easy and saving the child trouble without still further pampering him. The only reason why learning to spell is educative is that it compels a child to keep his eyes wide open for the manifold abnormalities of the written word, trains him to observe, and teaches him the great lesson so valuable in later life that the exceptions to a rule or principle are more numerous and important than the cases that come under it. We are, despite the extraordinary power of abstract logical thinking displayed by some of our great men, a race of empiricists, to whom the particular instance is more precious than the generality. We acquire that bias of mind when we learn to spell. It has its drawbacks no doubt, but no one can deny its advantages without treason against the genius of the race.

But is not the whole idea of phonetic spelling unsound? There must, indeed, be some general phonetic resemblance between the sound and the spelling; you could not have a system in which Majoribanks was spelt Cholmondeley. But it is enough if there is a general resemblance, and perfect phonetic spelling, even if it could be obtained without the burning of all our libraries, stands in no real relationship to the processes of the mind. For you speak for the ear but spell for the eye. You might just as well object that you could not hear what a picture says as complain that a printed word does not talk its exact sound. No educated man reads by sound, and if he did it would take him a week to read his daily paper. Indeed, the whole art of reading is to make your mind travel on the wings of the eye and not by the slow lumbering chariot of the ears.

Phonetic spelling would not quicken the apprehension of the rustic reader, for as he has to gear down the printed word into the sound that it represents, before he attaches a meaning to it, it makes no difference to him what the actual spelling is. Kum, rite, tung, det, nelz are just as difficult to him as come, write, tongue, debt, and knelt, for his trouble is the transition between eye and ear and spelling does not help him there. On the other hand, a changed spelling would greatly retard the processes of the man who has learnt to read. He would cease to read rapidly with his eye, or find it much more difficult to do so; he would often not know what a word spelt in the new phonetics meant until he had translated it into sound; the whole pace of his mind would be slowed down. No doubt as he grew used to the new spelling some of the pace might come back, but why subject him to all this inconvenience and discomfort, counterbalanced as it would be by no greater ease and comfort in reading for the slower-witted and less well-educated man? And some of the pace would never come back. For the oddities and eccentricities of our spelling assist the eye in reading. They are like the landmarks which enable the aviator to find his way; remove them and the uneven visual surface of print becomes a level plain of sound, with none of the old familiar landmarks, and the fast traveller has to descend and fly more slowly. We can read quickly by the

flash of a page, the thunder of the sound travels much more slowly.

The main philosophical objection to phonetic spelling, therefore, is that it tends to reduce the rapid, educated reader to the pace of the slow and uneducated without doing anything to quicken the general standard of apprehension. Therein it conforms to the process of levelling down which is observable in all departments of modern life. But happily there are stout-vested interests in the old spelling which may be relied on to strengthen the resistance of philosophy to the proposed new changes. And romance, too, is on the side of our present spelling, for many of our strange spellings are urns that enshrine the dust of the centuries, and there is many a silent consonant that talks earnestly and learnedly to your philologist. If we are to have reform in spelling let it not be retrograde and phonetic. Let it aim rather at grammalogues of print, so that our eyes can take in the sense of a whole page by a single glance and grasp a book in five minutes. Such a reform would incidentally have the advantage of reducing the bulk of our books and newspapers, but, however rapid you can make the eye's comprehension of print, it will still fall short of the bewildering rapidity of thought. Phonetic spelling forsooth! It is a proposal to sell our cars and to take to travelling on donkeys again.

## THE COMEDY OF WESTMINSTER

*House of Commons, Thursday*

PARLIAMENT is not always amusing. The period that follows the Address on the King's Speech and precedes the opening of the Budget is particularly lacking in entertainment. Supplementary estimates bore everybody, both the people whose business it is to carry them through and those who are obliged to combat and delay their passage. It is rarely that they produce debates of any general interest, although such exceptions do occasionally occur.

The debate on the proposal to supply Scotland with steel houses produced at least two dramatic scenes. The first was when Mr. Kirkwood, seeing, or thinking that he saw, Lord Weir in the Peers' Gallery, proceeded to apostrophize him both by word and gesture. Mr. Kirkwood sees himself as the mouthpiece of the working classes, and finding himself face to face with a representative of all that he and they hate most in the comprehensive term of "capitalist," he determined to make the best of such an opportunity. He failed. His sincerity is unquestioned, his fluency unfailing, but his violence invariably overshoots the mark. His gestures are just too emphatic, his r's are rolled a tenth of a second too long, with the result that in attempting the sublime he achieves only the ridiculous. More effective from every point of view was the scene that followed when Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell, the vanquisher of Lord Oxford at Paisley, denounced the iniquities of Trade Unions and gave the lie direct to those pseudo-representatives of Labour like Mr. Wheatley, who have asserted that the homeless preferred to remain so rather than live in any building not constructed of stone or bricks.

Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell's action was courageous, and the merit of it was enhanced rather than diminished by his own full comprehension of the seriousness of the step he was taking and by the consequent nervousness under which he laboured. His colleagues around and behind him did their utmost to increase his difficulties in this respect by continual interruptions. "How flimsy is the basis of human friendship," he exclaimed bitterly after some particularly wounding

taunt from Mr. Buchanan, and, if little things may be allowed to recall great ones, memory travelled back to the historic scene when Burke denounced for ever on the floor of the House the friendship of Fox, who sat listening with the tears pouring down his face.

It was not the first occasion upon which Mr. Buchanan had called attention to himself by interrupting. Earlier in the debate, while Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was speaking, he had denied the appellation of "friend" when referred to as such by his leader, and expressed his willingness to be included among the Right Honourable Gentleman's enemies. This young Scotsman (his worst enemies allege that he is Irish) is losing the hold which he once seemed likely to acquire over the House of Commons. He has many of the gifts of an orator, including a considerable command of language and an exceptionally attractive voice. But recently he has contributed little except interruptions to the debates, and he appears to have given up the trouble of preparing speeches.

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It is time that Lord Oxford prepared a printed formula for acknowledging defections from his party. Commander Hilton Young is the latest to fall out from the headlong charge down the Gadarene hill. His swan song from the Liberal benches took the same form as that of Sir Alfred Mond—a speech upon the subject of Irak. The speech that he delivered upon this occasion was the most important of the debate, and, containing as it did so much first-hand knowledge of the subject, provided the Government with a case that was unanswerable and remained unanswered. Once more Mr. Ramsay MacDonald showed himself unworthy of an important occasion, and, finding himself short of any sound arguments, descended to an attack upon the League of Nations, which he accused of weakness and partiality. Less responsible Members on the same side of the House were swift to follow this evil example, and Mr. Thurtle proceeded to describe the League as the support of the strong against the weak, while Mr. Saklatvala did not hesitate to denounce it as a system of organized brigandage.

In the debate on a subsidy to Northern Ireland the Chancellor of the Exchequer succeeded in provoking a scene by taunting his opponents with having previously intended to give money to Russians which they were now grudging to the unemployed of Belfast. Mr. Churchill is himself the best tempered of Parliamentarians, yet he succeeds more than any in arousing the wrath of the Labour Party. Occasionally it may be that he intends to do so, but more often it is due to a failure to foresee the effect that his words are likely to produce.

His success during this session was when at the close of the debate on the road fund he spoke for some three-quarters of an hour to a crowded and delighted House, holding their attention, provoking their laughter, disarming their criticism and telling them nothing.

This debate afforded a curious example of the complexity of the procedure of the House of Commons. "I have a distinguished foreign friend listening in the gallery," exclaimed one harassed member, "and how am I to explain to him what is going on?" A motion which is antagonistic to the Government is moved by one of their own supporters and another of their supporters moves an amendment. The Opposition support the motion, the Chancellor of the Exchequer speaks for half an hour without saying anything and everybody seems delighted; finally the Opposition, who are in a minority, move "that the question be now put" and the Government with a huge majority oppose it. The motion is defeated and they all go happily "to bed."

FIRST CITIZEN

## CONSERVATISM TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

### III

BY THE HON. OLIVER F. G. STANLEY, M.P.

*[We publish below the third of a short series of articles on the Task of Conservatism by some of the younger Conservative Members of Parliament. Last week Captain Anthony Eden, M.P., wrote; the week before, Mr. Duff Cooper, M.P. Next week we hope to publish an article by Captain M. H. Macmillan, M.P.]*

LET us hope that the pressing and complex problems of the present will prevent the leaders of Conservative thought from devoting too much time to the question of the future of Conservatism, for a party which has delimited its future has drawn up its own death warrant. How Socialist leaders to-day must regret their past declarations, too precise for evasion, that the future of the Labour Party was indissolubly and eternally linked with the "national ownership of the means of protection and distribution"! They know that the charms of national ownership are failing, the attractions are withering, the allurement is fast becoming repulsion; but through an indiscretion of youth, they are bound—till political death do them part—to this uninspiring bed-fellow. Let Conservatives take warning from this awful example. Let them refrain from announcing with fatal decisiveness that this or that measure is an eternal principle of Conservatism; for new conditions may arise, the whole face of politics may alter, and they may be left, a moribund party, bound to dead aims and exploded theories. For how can the future of Conservatism be dogmatically defined by anyone who is modest enough to admit ignorance of the future of the world in which Conservatism is to play its part? How can one declare that the future of Conservatism lies, say, in protection for agriculture, when a new manure or a new seed may transform in a year the whole basis of that industry? Until lately the union of Great Britain and Ireland was an essential part of the future of Conservatism: the union has gone, but Conservatism goes on. In truth, only the present of a political party can be dealt with in detail: its future and its past must be matters for generalization. We talk about the golden age of Conservatism, of the progressive days of Disraeli; but, if we descend to details, we find that the legislation of the period which we eulogize as being so progressive would not to-day raise a qualm in the heart of the most reactionary of backwood Tories. All we mean when we speak thus of the past is that according to the standards of the time, the spirit of Conservatism then was keener and more sympathetic than either before or since: all we can say of the future is that Conservatism will appeal to certain emotions and will advance along certain lines, though the form of its appeal and the stages of its advance will be determined by the conditions of the future.

First, Conservatism takes its stand on reality, the reality of certain aspects of the human mind and the human heart, which are erroneously believed by some to have been improved out of existence. The whole difference between Socialism as represented by the modern Socialist, and individualism as represented by the Conservative, turns on this point. The Socialist high-brow, believing that progress and education must result in eliminating from the make-up of human nature the natural instincts of self-interest and self-preservation, has no difficulty in taking the further step of believing that the result has already been achieved. Safe in his little world of illusion, he preaches the gospel that the service of the State brings its own reward to an audience which looks on the service of the State as the lightest and best paid of all possible jobs. For good or ill the competitive instinct still exists even in the most improved circles—look at

the Council of the Labour Party on the Trade Union hierarchy—and to ignore it when planning your machinery of society is to build a steam engine with no place for the steam. The Conservative recognizes the survival of these natural instincts and still relies on competition to make the wheels go round, though ready to take safeguards against its misuse.

Secondly, Conservatism recognizes the value of symbolism, of a concrete focus for an abstract emotion. We Conservatives stand for the Crown, because logically or illogically, rightly or wrongly, the devotion, the respect and the self-sacrifice which theoretically should be laid at the feet of an elected head of the State or a chairman of a county council are in practice the prerogative of old-established and hereditary kingship. We stand for a church, because men's minds need the stepping-stones of ritual and ceremony, of custom and tradition in their advance towards abstract truths. We stand for nationalism, for our own country, because although men's minds may perceive the advantages of internationalism their hearts revolt at its coldness, and our own country can still evoke patriotism and self-sacrifice where the League of Nations would draw a blank. These old traditions, these old sentiments, these old emotions, what sport they make for the pen of an H. G. Wells. But curiously enough, such is the unseeing folly of mankind and British mankind in particular, they persist, despite Mr. Wells, and while they survive Conservatism will flourish.

Finally, in addition to its appeal to certain types of emotion, Conservatism will always have its appeal to certain types of mind. Our national mentality detests theory which smacks of intellect and embraces practice which is regarded as common sense. We are essentially a race of empiricists, and Conservatism is empirical progress. Our national mentality dislikes change; it refuses to look on change as a glorious adventure but regards it as a painful necessity. Conservatism, while placing no obstacle in the way of change, holds that there is a *prima facie* case for existing institutions and present customs and that the onus of proof is on those who seek the change, not on those who resist it. Our national mentality, while not averse to a mild flutter, is nervous of gambling for unlimited stakes. Conservatism ensures that if the worst comes to the worst, if the change—and every change is a gamble—is unsuccessful, we shall not lose more than we can afford. Conservatism in fact is deep rooted in the minds and the hearts of the majority of British citizens, and so long as we give no hostages to fortune by immortal and eternal adhesions to ephemeral and mortal theories, the Conservative Party, which according to its opponents commenced to die a century ago, will continue to expire for at least a century to come.

Meanwhile, certain difficulties and dangers lie before, and certain work is ready for our hands to do; on our evasion of the dangers and our performance of the work the immediate prospects, though not the ultimate future, of Conservatism will depend. Perennial danger lies in the protectionist issue. To the lovers of neatness there are great advantages in one of the great parties bearing the quite distinctive label of protection, just as the other bears the label of nationalization. Conservatism is difficult to define, hard to explain; how much easier if it simply meant Tariff Reform. And so every twenty years or so we spend hectic months proclaiming that protection is one of the living truths of Conservatism, which period is followed by years of painful and laborious explanations that protection is purely a matter of expediency and has nothing to do with the real principles of Conservatism at all. The recurrent desire to hitch our party wagon to this unlucky star has been the cause of most of our defeats in the past and remains the most likely reasons for a similar event in the future. The other great danger is that of relapse into a policy of stagnation or even reaction. Defeat in the past has

always served to quicken the sympathies and stir the activity of our party; long-continued success has always roused the worst of the feelings to which Conservatism may appeal: self-interest, apathy, cowardice, the creeds of "let well alone" and "keep what you've got." With our present Prime Minister at the head of the party, whatever other mistakes may be made, self-interested reaction is not likely to be one of them; but men of good will must be on their guard against palace intrigues, bred by years of easy success and having as their object a return to the atmosphere wherein vested interests best flourish. Mr. Baldwin is above all a symbol, and Conservatism, with its love of symbols, will do well to cherish him.

Of the work which lies to our hands, it is difficult to speak in terms of politics; economics must rule the roost for the next few years. Electricity and coal, trade facilities and land banks are matters which demand that those who deal with them should be business men first and Conservatives second. But if Conservatism may find no means of self-expression in legislative acts at Westminster, it can use its influence in the country to propagate the doctrine of service, to teach, on the one hand, that inequalities in wealth, which result from our present system, can only be justified by corresponding inequalities of sacrifice, and on the other, that human happiness and human merit cannot be measured solely in terms of cash. Let statesmen and politicians, captains of industry and Trades Union leaders ponder on Disraeli's description of the Conservative mission: "To announce that power has only one duty—to secure the social welfare of the people."

## THE LETTERS OF QUEEN VICTORIA,

1862-1878

(VOL. I)

By A. A. B.

THE effect of these two fat and heavy volumes of Queen Victoria's letters\* is somewhat marred by the obvious fact that they are the remainder-biscuit out of a chest that has been ransacked by rapacious experts. Mr. G. E. Buckle, in his six volumes of the Life of Disraeli, is admittedly the chief of these raiders; Lord Morley, in his three volumes on Gladstone, is a good second; while following in their wake we have the Life of Lord Granville by Lord FitzMaurice, the Life of Lord Clarendon by Sir Herbert Maxwell, the Lives of Archbishop Tait and Lord Cranbrook, and last, but by no means least, Sir Sidney Lee's King Edward VII. These are heavy drafts, as the editor does not deny, upon the Windsor Archives; so that presumably the present volumes are meant to evolve for the instruction of the public a still more intimate view of Queen Victoria's character. If that be the intention, I cannot help saying that many of the letters written in the first years of the Queen's widowhood had better not have been published. Why dwell upon the weakest and most unhappy period of anybody's life in detail? The Great Queen is seen at her worst in the six years that followed the death of the Prince Consort. I feel about the opening letters of this volume very much what I felt about the publication of the senile love-letters of Lord Beaconsfield. In both cases one or two letters

\* 'The Letters of Queen Victoria.' Edited by G. E. Buckle. (2 vols.). Murray. 52s. 6d. net.

would surely have been enough. That the Queen of England, at the age of forty-two, in the very prime of life, surrounded by a large and affectionate family, guided in political business by the most courteous and sagacious statesmen in the world, ruling over a loyal and prosperous Empire, should describe herself as a crushed, lone, helpless widow, whose one wish was to follow her husband to a better world, is undignified, and unworthy of her station. The exaggerated language in which Victoria paints her morbid passion of bereavement is not only addressed to her relatives and her children, but to her Ministers, to Palmerston, Russell, and Gladstone. In her later years the Queen showed great power of self-restraint, of endurance, and determination. There was only one living person, perhaps, who could have taught the Queen the duty of controlling these feelings—namely, her uncle, King Leopold, who unfortunately encouraged her in what was really a form of self-indulgence. These early letters are written in a stilted and hysterical style; and after pages of them, it was with unspeakable delight that I came across a letter from "Vicky" (the Crown Princess of Prussia), who writes: "Things here are in such a mess as never was." There was another prejudice which contributed greatly to the Queen's unpopularity in these years. A Sovereign who is afraid of crowds is like a sailor who is sea-sick, or a nurse who faints at the sight of blood. Victoria was afraid of crowds in her early widowhood, and consequently hated London, and would never, if she could possibly help it, sleep so much as a night at Buckingham Palace, always returning after her Drawing-rooms in the afternoon to Windsor. Londoners bitterly resented this avoidance of their city, of which they are justly proud. Even Windsor Castle, the glory of England, the Queen wrote of as "a living grave."

Nor can it be said that the historical interest of the events with which the Queen was called upon to cope is absorbing, for the simple reason that the ground has been traversed over and over again in the very biographies to which I have above alluded. Indeed, whoever writes about the Duchies of Schleswig-Holstein, or the Reform Bill of 1867, should be heavily fined. We all know that Russell and Palmerston made fools of themselves about the Duchies, having first strutted before Europe as the protectors of Denmark, and having finally sneaked out of the consequences of their words. Devoted as she was to Alexandra, Princess of Wales, the Queen was decidedly pro-Prussian at the outset of the quarrel, though after the annexation, and still more after the war upon Austria in 1866, she began to write to Vicky about the "infamy of Prussia." The best letters in the volume are those of the Crown Princess, afterwards the Empress Frederick, who gives a vivid, but just, account of her difficult position under the eye of Bismarck. Queen Victoria's views on the foreign politics of Europe, written to her daughter, to the Kings of Prussia and Belgium, and to her Ministers, are sound and well expressed; but it is lamentable to observe how little effect they had on the course of events.

It will interest the present generation to know Queen Victoria's real opinion of Lord Palmerston. Just after his death she wrote to her uncle, the King of the Belgians: "He had many valuable qualities, though many bad ones, and we had, God knows, terrible trouble with him over foreign

affairs. Still, as Prime Minister he managed affairs at home well, and behaved to me well; but I never liked him, or could ever the least respect him, nor could I forget his conduct on a certain occasion to my Angel. He was very vindictive, and personal feeling influenced his political acts very much." It was only when, in 1866, the Conservatives turned out Gladstone on the Reform Bill, that the Queen began to be aware of Disraeli. In an extract from her Journal, which, by the way, is more interesting than her letters, the Queen notes: "Saw Mr. Disraeli after tea, who spoke of the great Reform meeting on the 3rd, also of reform in general. . . . He was amiable and clever, but is a strange man." Strange indeed must that exotic figure have seemed in the prim circle of a Victorian Court! But it is extraordinary how Victoria expanded and mellowed under the warmth of Disraeli's sympathy and tact. Here was a second, though a very different, and more stimulating, Lord Melbourne! In a long letter to Her Majesty in 1868, arguing against the promotion of Tait from London to Canterbury, there is one of Disraeli's most characteristic touches: "There is in his idiosyncrasy a strange fund of enthusiasm, a quality which ought never to be possessed by an archbishop of Canterbury or a Prime Minister of England. The Bishop of London sympathizes with everything that is earnest; but what is earnest is not always true; on the contrary, error is often more earnest than truth." What could Victoria have thought of this cynicism? In no department of her duties did the Queen's common sense and knowledge of men come out more strongly than in the ecclesiastical appointments, where she nearly always opposed Disraeli, who had the sagacity to yield.

[A. A. B. will review Vol. II in a subsequent issue.]

### AT A CONCERT

By J. B. PRIESTLEY

**W**HAT a piece of work is the Albert Hall! How noble in the season! How infinite in capacity! Although I live almost in its shadow, I had not been inside for years before this afternoon, when I suddenly decided to attend a concert there. I knew very well that it would not be a good concert; but then, I have long ago given up expecting concerts to be enchanting. I suspect that there are no more good concerts, not since the war, and that the last time I heard Nikisch and the London Symphony, or that miraculous evening when I heard Kreisler, Casals, and Bauer (or was it Pauer?) playing together, was the last of all the good concerts; not, you understand, of pleasant half-hours or so spent listening to music, but of evenings in the grand manner. But apart from this conviction, I had every reason to know that this would not be a good concert, for it consisted only of the works of Tchaikowsky, a gentleman who has his moments, but has too many nerves and too few brains for my taste. He will mutter and whimper, scream with rage, then grow moony over the samovar and stuff you with chocolate creams, until you want to knock him on the head with a stout fugue. There is no Russian composer, and so far as I can see there never will be a Russian composer, with whom I wish to spend a long Sunday afternoon. Nor did I particularly wish to hear the orchestra,

nor the young lady who was to play the violin concerto and a few odds and ends and be encored and given large bouquets. No, I think I must have gone to renew my acquaintance with the Albert Hall, and that is why I climbed innumerable stairs and sat in the middle of the topmost gallery.

There is no better place in London for a romantic idealist-philosopher than a seat in that gallery. So fantastic is the scene before you that you begin to feel that you must have invented it all. It is like something seen in a dream or remembered from Atlantis, or one of the illustrations to Mr. Wells's 'When the Sleeper Wakes.' I have spent hours, in dreams, wandering about such buildings, vacant and dim, rushing from gallery to gallery at last in a crazy panic. Incredible that merely by turning aside from Kensington Gore and climbing some steps, you should find yourself in such a place, looking down on people—important people, too, many of them—crawling about like ants. Is it to be wondered at that as yet no rumour of lighting by electricity has reached that vast roof, which still has its thousands of little gas-jets that hang in clusters and, strange as it may sound, look like pale yellow roses dangling from the roof? How fantastic and mysterious are those pieces of wire netting that are stretched across the dizzy space as if they were aerial hurdles! And what could be nearer a boy's vision of a circus than that vast canopy which hides the central roof from our sight? But, then, perhaps the place is a circus, a circus on the grand scale, whose ring is not down on the floor but in the space, the empty air, round which the galleries, tier after tier, are ranged. And what strange creatures have performed in that ring!—for has it not seen the dubious arguments and bad metaphors of the politicians come trotting out like old circus horses, and the unnecessary cadenzas of the violinists, the meaningless semiquavers and trills of the sopranos, all performing their tricks? Is there not clowning without end there, week after week, year after year, with bouquets in showers, tumults of applause, streets jammed with large motor-cars, sweating Press agents, and reporters scribbling for dear life?

When a few thousand more maggots had crept into their seats, I suddenly realized that a handful of them, far below, were the members of a full-sized orchestra assembling, and that the faint sounds I occasionally caught were the tuning-up sounds once so dear to my heart. It was impossible to have any sort of feeling on account of these mere specks, but had they been nearer I think I should have felt something of the old thrill. There was a time, in my teens, when I had a passion for orchestras. Not only did I love listening to them, but with true amorous inclusiveness I loved everything about them. I always counted the players, noted the position of all the instruments, the balance of strings to wood-wind and brass, and whatever else there was to be remarked. The sight of the players, with their scarves, soft hats, pipes, and instrument cases, arriving or departing always gave me a thrill. To talk to one, perhaps over a beer, and hear gossip of the London Symphony, the Hallé, the Scottish, the Boston Symphony, the Weingartner, and so forth, was sheer bliss. A good orchestral player seemed to me then, and sometimes seems to me still, the happiest of mortals, with his camaraderie and

innocent Bohemianism, his journeys here and there and his nightly adventures on the ocean of sound. There was only one thing better than being an instrumentalist, and that, of course, was being the conductor of a large orchestra—surely the grandest and most *puissant* of all our fellow creatures. Oh! to be a conductor, to weld a hundred men into one singing giant, to build up the most gorgeous arabesques of sound, to wave a hand and make the clamouring strings sink to a mutter, to wave again, and hear the brass crashing out in triumph, to throw up a finger, then another and another, and to know that with every one the orchestra would bound forward into a still more ecstatic surge and sweep, to fling oneself forward and for a moment or so keep everything still, frozen, in the hollow of one's hand, and then to set them all singing and soaring, and in one final sweep, with the cymbals clashing at every flicker of one's eyelid, to sound the grand Amen. Many an hour I would spend, secreted in my bedroom or marching on a country road, conducting enormous invisible orchestras, whose symphonies were fully audible to me but would have appeared to other people merely like a number of hissing and groaning sounds that I alone was making. It was one of the happiest of my many idiosyncrasies.

A little later there appeared on the front of the platform a lady in white no bigger than my thumbnail, and at the sight of this missikin we all loudly applauded. And now I think I know why so many good Roman citizens could watch unmoved the atrocities of the arena: it is because the places were so big, like this Albert Hall of ours. Had there suddenly appeared by the side of that tiny white figure a tiger about an inch and a half long, and this tiger had proceeded to eat its companion pygmy, I doubt if I should have been really stirred, for it would have all been so far away, as unreal to me as a murder in the heart of China. This, too, may explain why so many musical atrocities are tolerated here. What are a false note or two, a crotchet debased into a quaver and a quaver promoted into a crotchet, a vile piece of phrasing, an occasional misinterpretation, where everything is so far away and only happening in a kind of dream? How is it possible to worry oneself about the mere niceties of art in a building that looks like an old-fashioned sketch of the Day of Judgment? I do not say that our violinist could be accused of all these faults, but I do say that she must not take our very liberal applause as a serious tribute to her genius. The fact is we were only too ready to applaud. If the end man of the very last row of second violins had been given a foreign name, and perhaps a wig, and brought on to perform, I doubt if our applause would have been any the less enthusiastic. For my own part I will freely confess that I clapped my hands because I, too, felt like making some sort of noise in that colossal space, if only to convince myself that I had not died and become a blessed ghost. Moreover, any kind of human activity viewed from that appalling angle would have roused my enthusiasm. If the tiny creature in white had made her appearance and merely thrown up and caught a microscopic orange or two, or beaten up some quite invisible eggs in a dish, the result would have been just the same for me, who would have clapped my hands for more oranges or eggs and felt proud of my gallant little species. Actually, I escaped before she finally disappeared, for my

old acquaintance, '1812,' a work that should amply revenge Napoleon for the loss of his Grand Army, was threatening; so I sought and found, rather to my astonishment, the outer air. There is no touch of a crazed dream, no suggestion of the Last Day, about Kensington, and I must confess that I was relieved to find myself there, in the fading pale gleams of wintry sunshine, stuffing some tobacco into my pipe as I walked home to tea and reality.

## DISCREDITABLE OCCURRENCES

By D. S. MACCOLL

"THIS is a very favourable place for scenes," an islander said to Mrs. Muirhead Bone in the pleasant language which is made out of book-English by a Gaelic mind.\* The trade of Mrs. Bone's men takes them up and down the earth to many such places, drawing and painting. She goes with them, brooding, and the Western Isles were a very favourable place for that also. Thus the "Tune, Palestrina," given out in the Free Church of Iona, with a pale sun slanting in upon the little pulpit, the precentor, and the fisher-folk, called up St. Peter's—its vast spaces, silver lamps, and voices chanting his own music above the altar-tomb of the composer.

Over against that staid echo from the pomps of Rome in Presbyterian psalmody was a wilder music, that of the pipes, standardized in the seventeenth century at the MacCrimmon College in Skye. MacLeod's pipers gave a seven years' course, and "the pipes were not taught from written music, but by a kind of syllabic jargon . . . known only to pipers . . . a primitive tonic sol-fa in an oral form." But there must have been attempts to transcribe it, for I have a note somewhere about an ancient piper who came to a Highland Society's meeting in one of the big towns with rolls of written music. No one could make head or tail of the script. He went away in a rage, and the records with him of God knows how much tempestuous history in sound.

But if Mrs. Bone responds to the windy strains of drone and chanter and the proud strutting of the piper, she is revolted by what the pibrochs and coronachs commemorate. "It is astonishing," she says,

how proud people can be of discreditable occurrences in the past. There was a tale told me of the Clan MacLeod by a gentle old lady who owned that name. How the clan shut up a host of MacDonalds in a cave in the island of Eigg, and, filling the entrance with brushwood, set fire to it and suffocated everybody inside. She was, or affected to be, proud of this in the chronicles of her clan. Yet it surely wasn't nice.

No, it was not; and there were even more discreditable occurrences (what Wordsworth otherwise describes as "old, unhappy, far-off things, and battles long ago") between the MacLeods and MacDonalds. The MacLeods burned one assembly of MacDonalds in a church instead of a cave. And there is the dark tale of Dunvegan. That castle, a desolate pile upon weedy rocks, belongs to "faery lands forlorn." It holds the fairy flag, which has been twice waved in extremity—once for famine, once in battle—and waved a third time will lose its virtue. Here it was that Donald Gorm, MacDonald of Sleat, with his bargemen, was taken in by MacLeod on a wild night and sat away from the taboo of the boar's head, below

\* Of the Western Isles.' Forty woodcuts by Stephen Bone, with letterpress by Gertrude Bone. Foulis. 6s. net.

the salt, proclaiming that where he sat was the head of the table, and making boastful play with his dagger. And here those MacDonalds also would have burned in the outhouse given them for sleeping quarters, but slept under the rocks and escaped.

That discreditable occurrence in the Isle of Eigg set me brooding in my turn, for I have to confess that one of the most cherished possessions of my childhood was a bone from the cave. It was part of a "museum," the earliest of which I was curator, some six objects in all, that were "ranged with careful art" near my bed. It was given me by my Highland governess, a MacPhie from Fort William. It was she, moreover, who lit a flame of the clan-spirit by reciting, from some muster-poem I have never been able to identify, lines about :

Brave MacColls from Appin's sylvan bowers.

There are few, if any, of them now in those "bowers" of birch and holly that sent three hundred to fight under Montrose at Inverlochy : most of them must have gone to the wars or the Colonies, to the tune of 'Lochaber no more.' But the churchyards of Appin and Far Glen Creran are full of the name, spelt variously, down to the compendious "M'ol"; and one of our line, I used to be told, was followed to the grave by forty other Dugald MacColls. They had become a small clan or sept without a chief, though they still had their gathering tune, the 'Head of the High Bridge'; their slogan, "Sinn Fhein, Sinn Fhein, Clan Cholla Glasdrum"; and a singularly complacent motto, *Justi ut sidera fulgent*. They carried the flag for Stewart of Appin, to Culloden among other fields, from which an ancestor of mine brought away some bullets in his body. But in earlier days they had taken a bigger place, as Kuno Meyer told me. He had found in an Irish library a Gaelic manuscript, I think of the fourteenth century, beginning :

It is easy to praise the MacColls, and relating how the then chief of the clan was a sort of Bell-the-Cat, taking the lead of the Highland host against the Southron. Kuno was to translate the saga, but in place of that, his proper occupation, the war carried him away to propaganda against his English friends. He died in that bitterness, and I am not likely to hear any more of the story. I told him in return that Deirdre was a MacColl, which at first he would not believe, but admitted that the poem, 'Aoidheadh Chlainn Uisnich,' in A. and D. Stewart's 'Highland Bards,' was ancient. Sir Walter Scott made the father of Finn MacCoul our progenitor. If so, Fingal's Cave is our sea doorstep, for "Fyn MakCoul, filius Coeli," a tall man, "*uti ferunt immani statura septennum enim cubitorum hominem fuisse narrant*," left Ireland by the Giant's Causeway and waded out in Staffa. But all this matter of Finn, the three Collas, and other "goddis in Ireland" is obscure, involving several clans: the MacDonalds were disgruntled at Culloden because the place of Clan Colla on the Prince's right was not given to them. In more recent history (about 1455) there is an Homeric tale of a Cave of the Great Steep in Morven to be put beside that of Eigg. Stewart of Achnacone was in pursuit of one of the murderers of his father, a MacGillvray of Glencannel, who had taken refuge there with his men. A boy

herdsman, whose cow had been taken, led One-Eyed John MacColl and his band to the spot. They swarmed up by the stakes on the cliff face one by one. The MacGillvrays were at the far end and had left their arms piled at the entrance, like umbrellas. The One-Eyed crept in, screened by the fire and a great stone, heard MacGillvray complaining that his legs were growing slender in the cave, struck him under the chin, lifted him by the nape of his neck and legs, and hurled him from the mouth of the cave, while his followers accounted for the rest.†

Such traditional lore is wearing out, and I invoke aid from scattered members of the clan for Mr. Hugh MacColl, of Christ's College, Cambridge, who is collecting strands of family history. My own chances of occurrence, unless in some other admixture across the Atlantic, depended by a narrow thread. My great-grandfather in Appin had packed his household goods, including a library, rare in those parts, for emigration to America; but there came to the door a stranger, asking for shelter, which he could not find elsewhere. He was taken in, sickening, as it turned out, for typhus. The master and mistress of the house, having nursed him, caught the fever and died, leaving a child, who was looked after by the neighbours for a time and then left, to make his way in Glasgow.

I found one of the last of the race in 1911 acting as gate-keeper at Dunolly Castle, where Fingal's dog Bran was chained up, as W. P. Ker put it, "because he would go eating tourists, and it wasn't good for him." Bran's successor had some good tales of encounters between MacColls and Campbells. From Dunolly, some years before, I went with Ker—best of companions—to Iona, and spent a blessed day and night with him and the legends of St. Columba at the Temperance Inn, mitigated by the pocket flask of J. R. Doyle, Fellow of All Souls; and I have a drawing Ker made on a later visit, which might supplement Mr. Stephen Bone's woodcuts, of 'Women with Cameras patronizing the Island of Columcille.'

## MUSIC

### STRING QUARTETS

LAST Monday, between the hours of five-thirty and ten, I listened to six string quartets. As the works played included two by very modern composers and one of Beethoven's posthumous quartets, there was some hard thinking to be done. For the string quartet is, of all forms of music, the most concentrated and intellectual. It was the form which Beethoven chose for the final expression of his most profound ideas after he had worked them out experimentally on the pianoforte and embodied them in the more popular form of his symphonies. It is for this reason, and not because their idiom is difficult to our ears, that the late quartets are still caviare to the general. They express the experience of a world of ideas into which most people rarely enter and few have penetrated so profoundly. They are, therefore, best reserved for occasions when the mind is fresh and ready of apprehension. You cannot take them in, if you are weary, even as the less simple poems of Blake remain unintelligible to minds unattuned. There is something suggestive in this parallel, which has slipped in quite unpremeditatedly, between Beethoven

† See 'Adventures in Legend,' by the Marquis of Lorne.

led One.  
the spot,  
cliff face  
at the far  
entrance,  
screened  
Gillivray  
lender in  
him by  
urled him  
followers

and the contemporary English poet. Would Blake's ideas go better in music than in poetry, even better than in painting? Beethoven's ideas were less apocalyptic, but even they seem at times hardly expressible within the bounds of music, which is their only possible medium.

Beethoven, at any rate, was not uniformly successful in making his expression interesting. The E flat quartet (Opus 127), which was the one I heard on Monday, is a case in point. It is the first of the posthumous series and was composed, or at least begun, some time before the others; for we find him negotiating with Peters for its sale in July, 1822. I have not lately had the good fortune to hear this work with a fresh mind. Last year it was played by the Léner Quartet after the work in B flat (Opus 130), and the other night it was preceded by Béla Bartók's second quartet. However, I do not think it can be contested that the E flat quartet fails to reveal the greatness of Beethoven's mind to the degree achieved in the three later compositions. Yet the work is remarkable, if only as representing the gateway which leads to the complete expression of his genius. We are led from a first movement, which is alternately majestic and tender, through a set of variations, which at times foreshadows the sublime slow section of the A minor quartet, to a wild, fierce *scherzo* from which the issue is a *finale* of pure joy, in which Beethoven has turned the manner of Haydn to his own more profound purpose. The *scherzo* is the stumbling-block. It should be so wonderful, and yet I find its continual dotted rhythm becomes irritating before the end is reached. This is surely an instance of Beethoven's failure to find the right means of expressing his thought.

The performance of Béla Bartók's quartet emphasized the fact that Beethoven's latest music has by no means exhausted its seminal force. For here is a work which seems to owe a good deal to it, at least in matters of form. This is especially noticeable in the second movement, which is a *scherzo* in Beethoven's late manner. The poetic idea of the work as a whole is, not unnaturally, very different from Beethoven's. We begin with storm and stress, it is true, but work towards a quiet and rather melancholy resignation, not to the robust joyfulness, with which Beethoven proudly holds up his head in spite of the battering of fate. There are many things in the work which I do not pretend to like or understand, especially in the first movement, which becomes at times uncouth and ugly. Yet there is also such strength and so much beauty in this music that I am prepared to accept the rough for the sake of the smooth. The very violence of the anger which this work, like the violoncello sonata by his compatriot Kodály, has aroused in those who do not like it, is in itself a sign that these works have at least some force of character. For no one loses his temper with a nincompoop.

These quartets are strenuous work, both for players and listeners. But there is another aspect of the String Quartet as a form, which last Monday's experience suggests. The other two works of importance were by Mozart and Schubert. Mozart was represented by the quartet in B flat (K. 589), which was written for the King of Prussia in the last year of the composer's life, just after the completion of 'Cosi fan tutte.' The *trio* contains the germ of a theme later to be developed in the music of the three Genii in 'The Magic Flute.' Perhaps it was interest in this theme that made Mozart extend the *trio* to twice the length of the minuet, of which it forms the middle section. But otherwise it is, like the rest of the work, merely elegant music, devoid of any spiritual content such as the association might suggest. Schubert's posthumous work in D minor with the variations on 'Death and the Maiden' falls somewhere between this purely lyrical conversation between four instruments and the attempt to probe the eternal verities.

## THE THEATRE

### ACTING AS A FINE ART

BY IVOR BROWN

*The Three Sisters.* By Anton Tchekov. Translated by Constance Garnett. The Barnes Theatre.

ACTING as a fine art—a tautonomous title, you may observe. In reality, of course, my title is nothing of the kind. Acting, like any other art, cannot live only upon the rarest ether under pretence of being all air and fire itself. It must earn its bread-and-butter, and earning one's dietary, like consuming it, quite easily becomes a routine. There has to be routine in life, and it is only the poppy of aesthetic idealism that will deny it. The arts are part of life, and they, too, must have their discipline, their drudgery, their damnable iterations. So art rubs shoulders with artifice, and the once mountant brain accepts the rule of the skilled thumb. The artist learns his job as best he can and slogs away as best he can. "Experiment!" cries the reformer, and we agree. But innovation is no more a full-time job than a spark is the same as a flame. Experiment is but a means to an end. It is the path to a fresh routine. So wags the world away.

All artists go in danger of the machine. The novelist who has written one kind of prosperous novel will immediately have a dozen publishers begging him to repeat himself. But the actor is in a peculiarly menacing situation. Impounded in a prosperous play he may be compelled, or at least he will be sorely tempted, to clip his own wings where victory seems wingless and so to repeat one performance for a year or even years on end. Nor at the final collapse of the once "obstinate" success will he lightly be allowed to let the clipped pinions grow again. The managers will beg him to change no more than his tailor and his house of nightly call. He is established as the purveyor of a certain part; be it the rugged colonial, grave counsellor of quarrelsome couples, young sprig of elegance, no matter what. He is marked as a one-part man, decently salaried, secure in a profession where security is rare, and generally, as Baedeker says of the hotels, "well spoken of." Only he whose backbone comes out of a Sheffield forge is going to play nonconformist against such a comfortable establishment as this.

This kind of life must as surely take the edge off artistic ambition as usage blunts purpose and perception. Our hero may become an acting and an active member of a Sunday Club (the "Harrowby Players," shall we say?) which with an occasional scamped production opens the door to versatility. But the game is greater than the interlude. He finds himself minted and stamped by order of the public. As Such-an-one he has glittered; as Such-an-one he must eternally glow. Let our hero turn to repertory, you say. Then you are asking him to divide his salary by five and multiply his labours by nearly as much. In any case he probably began there. Repertory, in England, is for the young. That is its limitation. It means rehearsing a heavy part all day and every day and acting a heavy part all night. It means the constant parturition of unripe productions. Great presentations must lie more than a fortnight in the womb. Everybody in repertory is overworked and underpaid. Let us praise the fit bodies and indomitable spirits of those who carry it on; let us acknowledge that it is an excellent parade-ground for the awkward squad. But let us not cantingly pretend that this Ithaca, rough nurse of men, is also a choice pleasure in Parnassus. The Muse demands space, time, and crowns in the purse. The trouble about English repertory is that it trains its champions only to lose them, and no one has a right to blame those

who move on unless he is himself working twelve hours a day for six days a week with a pittance for reward, and no pay at all for holidays and "weeks out."

So we get this dilemma. Repertory, always harassed by poverty and over-strain, is a scramble in which the fine art of play-production inevitably gets rough-edged. Its skilled men leave it for the London theatre of monotones in which the fine art of acting is filed away by continual repetition of similar parts in similar characterless plays. The successful modern piece asks very little more of the successful modern player than the deft manipulation of a bundle of tricks. The art of some of our stars is a thing no more admirable than the dexterity of a conjurer. They carry their technique in their pockets from one stage-door to another as he transfers his silk hat, paper cylinders, and silk handkerchiefs from one children's party to the next. And then, suddenly and blessedly, something does turn up. A new mind comes into the popular theatre; a new adjustment of theatrical values is demanded. And the English actor can, thank heaven, respond.

That is one great virtue of such events as the Tchekov "boom." It has brought to more constant service in our theatre a producer of genius, Mr. Komisarjevsky. It has brought to our actors a chance to cultivate under his direction new modes and moods of dramatic expression. This chance they have taken. Mr. Komisarjevsky has said in an interview that the English actor is more pliable than the French. That interests me because I have often felt that French acting, so highly trained in gesture and diction, carried within itself the seeds of its own decay. Skill was destroying sensibility and imagination was being annihilated by a devastating competence of style. When I see a Comédie Française Company playing Molière I say to myself that this is very neat and exquisite, a wonderful pattern of voice and gesture, but is it really in the least what Molière meant when he loosed his great scamps upon the world? There comes a time when practice makes imperfect. I am glad to know from one who knows (for Mr. Komisarjevsky has recently done much work in Paris) that English acting has not been frozen up in its own particular style.

Tchekov is not at all a routine dramatist. At the same time he is so strange and subtle that to rush him into a repertory cycle along with something of Milne and Galsworthy may be to ruin him. What we are getting at Barnes is the best of both worlds; there is the careful production of the long-run system and there is the experimentation of the repertory spirit. Thus the actor's art need be neither the hustled histrionics of the latter nor the well-thumbed efficiency of the former. All the time it has a master-mind, both in author and producer, to quicken it. I therefore recommend a journey over Hammersmith Bridge not only because 'The Three Sisters' is a play as sadly beautiful as autumn itself yet graced with spring-time flash of merriment, but still more because you will see English players suddenly becoming greater than themselves and proving their fineness of spirit by their sensitive reaction to fine issues.

Go then to see the love of Masha and Vershinin, glowing at the heart of the play, for Mr. Ion Swinley and Miss Margaret Swallow are nobly kindled by the flame. Grim, plodding Olga and lively, pitiful Irina are made superb members of the sisterhood as Miss Mary Sheridan and Miss Beatrix Thomson embody them. When Irina goes to her loveless, ill-fated match with the Baron (Mr. John Gielgud) it is like the withering of some perfect flower. Go for the humours, for there are happy people in this play. Miss Dorice Fordred's bustling maternal arrogance in a house of spinsters, Mr. Pelham Boulton's bird-like chirrups of pedagogic complacence, Mr. Dan Roe's gentle caressing of the bottle and of pensionable years—these, too, are feats of acting in which the strong

sincerity of art tears away the mask of artifice and stands in its own purity. At Barnes a marriage of true minds (author's and producer's) has set English acting free of its daily bondage. It soars, unforced and unbiedened. It has given to one spectator at least the kind of pleasure for which he has waited through many a sad evening of disenchantment with the magic that a theatre should possess.

## NEW BOOKS AT A GLANCE

*Notice under this heading does not preclude or prejudice subsequent review.*

**I**N 'The Sacred Tree' (Allen and Unwin, 10s. 6d. net) Mr. Arthur Waley continues his translation of that remarkable Japanese novel, 'The Tale of Genji,' which was written *circa* A.D. 1000, and with three exceptions is the earliest extant example of Japanese fiction on a large scale. The translator, responding to the curiosity of many readers of the first instalment, now discusses the place of 'The Tale of Genji' in the literature of Japan.

'Casements' (Dent, 5s. net) is an attempt, by Mr. Richard Cledesley Savage, to render into English verse fifty French poems, by as many poets, produced between 1820 and 1920. If the volume was intended to be illustrative of the course of French poetry during the period, it should have included, both for intrinsic value and because that was the culmination of a particular movement, the work of Heredia. On the other hand, there was no adequate reason for including Catulle Mendès, who simply wrote everyone else's poems over again.

'The Charm of Indian Art' (Fisher Unwin, 10s. 6d. net) is by Mr. W. E. G. Solomon, who has some authority on this subject, but who seems here to have aimed at the uninstructed reader. There are illustrations of some merit.

'Architecture Explained' (Benn, 7s. 6d. net) is an extremely able, lucid, and judicious introduction to the subject by a writer, Mr. Howard Robertson, who has kept in mind the social as well as the aesthetic tests which must be applied to architecture. There are numerous illustrations, and these appear to be well chosen, on the whole, though some pictures of the worst productions of the last forty years in England might have been useful as warnings.

In 'The Parnell of Real Life' (Fisher Unwin, 7s. 6d. net) Mr. William O'Brien gives us a portrait of that leader coloured by his own political opinions. We have so far merely glanced through this book, but have noted some shrewd things: as, for instance, "Parnell had no fads, and scarcely any preferences, as to methods."

In 'My Apprenticeship' (Longmans, 21s. net) Mrs. Webb relates, with due solemnity, her development from a normal young human being into a fully equipped social and industrial reformer. It is a large, impressive, undoubtedly important book, with something about it which suggests emanation from a committee, and it is with disappointment that we find nothing in the nature of a minority report appended to it. A book with a moral, too, showing how he or she who begins to better the world casually will be gradually, inevitably, involved in whole-time effort to make humanity live according to "the statistics laid down for our guidance."

The frivolous may recoil from Mrs. Webb's book on to the ample bosom of 'Palgrave's Dictionary of Political Economy' (Macmillan, 36s. net), a new edition, produced under the expert care of Mr. Henry Higgs. The work is in its sort a classic; but we cannot applaud the economy which saves the cost of new plates by dumping new matter into an appendix.

'The Law Within' (Stanley Paul, 16s. net) is a further essay in that attempt at a new psychology on which Sir Bampfylde Fuller has long been engaged.



Dramatis Personae. No. 192.

By 'Quiz.'

### SOME PLAYWRIGHT-CRITICS

MR. ST. JOHN ERVINE  
MR. HORACE HORSNELL  
MR. ASHLEY DUKES

MR. BERNARD SHAW  
MR. IVOR BROWN  
MR. B. MACDONALD  
HASTINGS

MR. JAMES AGATE  
MR. HERBERT FARJEON  
MR. HUBERT GRIFFITH

## LITERARY COMPETITIONS

LAST week the SATURDAY REVIEW published the first of a series of Literary Competitions which will in future form a regular weekly feature of the paper. The Competitions are set in rotation by members of the regular staff of the SATURDAY REVIEW and by other well-known writers, who collaborate with the Editor in the work of judging the entries.

This week's competitions, the subjects of which are announced below, have been set by Mr. Ivor Brown, our Dramatic Critic.

### RULES

The following rules must be observed by all competitors:

- i. All envelopes must be marked LITERARY, followed by the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and addressed to The Editor, The SATURDAY REVIEW, 9 King Street, London, W.C.2 (e.g., this week: LITERARY 2a, or LITERARY 2b).
- ii. Typescript is not essential, provided the writing is legible, but competitors must use one side of the paper only. Pen-names may be employed if desired.
- iii. Where a word limit is set, every fifty words must be marked off by competitors on their MSS.
- iv. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves to himself the right to print in part or in whole any matter sent in for competition, whether successful or not. MSS. cannot be returned. Competitors failing to comply with any of these rules will be disqualified.

### COMPETITIONS. 2

SET BY IVOR BROWN

A. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best suggestion of Shakespeare's opinion of Marlowe and of Marlowe's opinion of Shakespeare. These opinions are supposed to be expressed in conversation in the absence of the man discussed, and the date imagined is just before Marlowe's death in 1593. The opinions may be as terse as competitors choose to make them, but in neither case may they exceed one hundred words, i.e., two hundred words is the limit of length for a complete answer.

B. We offer a First Prize of One Guinea and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best rhymed epigram in English on any event during the month of February, 1926. The word "event" may be understood to be of general application and covers any artistic or social as well as political occurrence. No epigram should be more than eight lines in length. Competitors, if they are preparing to dip their pens in gall, should remember that there is a law of libel.

Entries must reach the Editor, addressed according to the rules, not later than by the first post on Monday, March 8, 1926. The results will be announced in the issue of the SATURDAY REVIEW immediately following.

¶ The results of our first Competitions, set by Mr. Edward Shanks, will be published next week.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

¶ The Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW welcomes the free expression in these columns of genuine opinion on matters of public interest, although he disclaims responsibility alike for the opinions themselves and the manner of their expression.

¶ Letters which are of reasonable brevity, and are signed with the writer's name, are more likely to be published than long and anonymous communications.

¶ Letters on topical subjects, intended for publication the same week, should reach us by the first post on Wednesday.

### "THE BELLOCOSE PORTER"

SIR.—The remark in your above-mentioned article that "the treatment of the German minority in Italy has justifiably aroused indignation not only in Germany

and Austria but also in other countries of Europe," reveals the full extent of the danger to the peace of Europe, caused by Sig. Mussolini's violence. The Germans of the South Tyrol (*pardon!* "Alto Adige") are not the only "allogenous" minorities under Italian rule; there are also the Greeks of the Dodekanese and the Jugoslavs of Istria. Nothing would be better calculated to induce these minorities, which have common grievances, to unite together, than such speeches as those of the Italian dictator. For the forcible Italianization of the Germans in the "South Tyrol," including the deletion of the word *Helden* ("heroes"), or its equivalent, from war memorials, finds a parallel in the forcible Italianization of the Greek schools (respected for three centuries by the Turks) in the Dodekanese. Nor should we, as holders of Malta, the "eyesore" of Fascist Italy, forget the words written over his own signature by Sig. Mussolini in his own newspaper, *Il Popolo d'Italia*, twenty-eight days before he became Prime Minister: "It is in the interests of Italy . . . to collaborate in the demolition of the English (sic) Empire." *Obsta principiis*, of this "new Prussianism."

I am, etc.,

AN ANTI-CHAUVINIST

## ANOMALIES OF THE DOLE

SIR,—There are two glaring anomalies in our social life to-day that puzzle the unimportant yet necessary taxpayer. First, the desperate need for houses that forces men and women to live under conditions that disgrace our civilization, while able-bodied men stand idle at the street corners and draw a dole for unemployment, notwithstanding the fact that houses can be built, not merely by untrained, but by invalid men, as has been shown in the recently issued report of the Enham Village Centre for consumptives.

Secondly, the army of unemployed women who are drawing the dole while distracted householders seek domestic help in vain. It is true that the dole is not charity, but benefit earned by insured persons, yet earned only up to a point; beyond that point it becomes national subsidization of idleness. If insured persons cannot find employment in the trade or occupation under which they are insured by the time they have received full benefit in proportion to their contributions under the national scheme, they should surely then be compelled to take any available work for which they are physically fit. In this way the housing question and the lesser servant problem would be solved, and, incidentally, the moral fibre of the nation saved.

It is a just principle to keep from degradation men and women who cannot honestly get work; but to subsidize men and women who cannot get the work they fancy is farcical. Can no statesman tackle the present paradoxical state of things?

I am, etc.,

Compton, Staffordshire

MARGARET SPARROW

## CRUELTY AND IMAGINATION

SIR.—"Ex-M.F.H." arraigns as humbugs those who, while objecting to blood sport, are not vegetarians.

But why? The meat eater does not necessarily find pleasure in the slaughter which preceded his meal and what he condemns is not the killing but the wickedness of finding pleasure in it. The only rational attitude for a human being to adopt towards this question is that the slaughter of animals is a job utterly abhorrent to a sensitive spirit and fit for nobody but the professional butcher.

To me the most loathsome picture of an incongruity bordering on insanity is the presence of beautiful womanhood with blood-lust kindled eyes at a stag hunt or coursing meeting. For a poor creature distressed to death no pity even in the mother heart! Were not the

Almighty's mercy greater than His judgment many of these bloody assemblages of "sportsmen" would, like Corah and his company, go down quick into hell. So that they may escape the penalty of cruelty I would recommend the sporting *poseurs* for the illustrated papers to realize that a large proportion of their fellow countrymen do not think them fine but victims of a cowardly and brutal delusion.

I am, etc.,

DAVID FRANCIS THOMPSON

Clevedon House, Ben Rhydding, Yorks

SIR,—“Ex-M.F.H.”, in his reply to “A Lover of Mercy,” makes a great point of the destructive habits of the fox, but such an argument is something of a boomerang. Admittedly the fox is a cruel pest, and takes a delight in hunting and killing, but your correspondent omits to state that Reynard is carefully preserved for the sport of human beings who hold the same peculiar view of pleasure. If there were no hunting the fox would quickly follow his cousin the wolf into the story books, and two kinds of cruelty, to fowls as well as to foxes, would thus simultaneously disappear. As a result, a great national industry, British egg-production, would cease to be crippled at its source, and we should be in a far better position to hold our own against the new Danish invasion. In Denmark fox-hunting is prohibited by law in the interests of poultry-farmers, for it is recognized that hunting and the preservation of foxes go together.

In your same issue Tallyman observed in ‘Pedlar’s Pack’ that “the circus, with caged and trained animals, has no more place in a civilized community than a bear-garden or a bull-ring.” He might reasonably have added fox-hunting to the list, although many people, lacking imagination and blinded by custom and tradition, would be horrified at such a suggestion.

I am, etc.,

W. A. SIBLY

SIR,—I think your correspondent is wrong in saying that hunting the “carted” stag is the most cruel sport. Hunting the wild stag must almost inevitably be cruel, as the hunted animal has little or no hope of escape, and his death is a more prolonged and bloody affair than a kill with the foxhounds. But hunting the “carted” stag is surely of all sports the least cruel to the quarry and the most sporting for the hunters. Least cruel, because the stag has a turn of speed and a capacity for getting over obstacles which enable him to keep ahead until he finds his objective, a river or pond, where he is safe. If a hound does range alongside him, he can deliver, without checking speed, a kick which will effectually cause that hound to keep his distance. Most sporting, because he who hunts the stag must be prepared to travel fast across country and generally to take risks which he would not often have to face with the foxhounds. Lastly, anyone who sees the stag near the end of a long run must admit that he does not exhibit such symptoms of distress as do hounds, horses, or riders, and when all is over he drives home in a Ford van to his dinner.

I am, etc.,

MICHAEL VANE

Junior Army and Navy Club, S.W.1

#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

##### MUSIC

WIGMORE HALL. Miss Beatrice Harrison’s violoncello recital, including Kodaly’s Sonata. On Tuesday, March 2, at 8.15 p.m.

##### PLAYS

LYRIC THEATRE, HAMMERSMITH. The Three Hundred Club in ‘Mr. Godly Beside Himself,’ by Gerald Bullett. On Sunday, February 28.

THE OLD VIC. ‘As You Like It.’ On Monday, March 1. STRAND THEATRE. ‘Mrs. Warren’s Profession.’ On Wednesday, March 3.

## REVIEWS

### THE GLORIES OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY EDWARD SHANKS

*Beowulf.* Translated by Archibald Strong. Constable. 12s. net.

*Studies of English Poets.* By J. W. Mackail. Longmans. 10s. 6d. net.

*The Savoy Operas.* By W. S. Gilbert. Macmillan. 8s. 6d. net.

SOMETIMES I think that perhaps we do not boast enough about the many and varied glories of English literature. We have had, it is true, critics who have very serenely taken for granted that our literature is the finest the world has ever known, just as we have had experts in other spheres who have assumed as easily that our political system, our judiciary and our police are the finest in the world. Perhaps indeed it is these who, by striking somewhat pungently our sense of humour (which may or may not be the finest in the world) have made us, if not humbler, at any rate quieter than we need be about the things of which we may legitimately boast. Professor Mackail’s book contains a sentence which is not what I mean by boasting, which transcends that essentially moderate form of self-expression: “We possess a body of lyrical poetry to which, alike in range and in beauty, that of Greece alone is comparable.” It may be so. Indeed, speaking soberly, the lyrical poetry of Greece, as we now have it, is not at all comparable to ours because there is so little of it. But this ranking of competitive cultures is dry as well as invidious work. Let us for once indulge in a hearty shout of self-praise celebrating the people which can produce works so excellent and so diverse as those contained, or treated, in the three volumes before us, and let us do so without reference, or prejudice, to what has been done by other peoples. We, as the kindly nurses of both the author of ‘Beowulf’ and Sir William Schwenk Gilbert, have surely done well enough, whatever Greeks, Italians or Frenchmen may have done.

And the author of ‘Beowulf’ was, it seems, one of us. Professor Chambers, in an admirable introduction to Professor Strong’s translation of the epic, sums up the results of the most modern scholarship and definitely rejects the view that here we have Christian redactors working over and enlarging and unifying a collection of much earlier, pagan lays. The traces of Christian morality cannot be separated from the rest; and the re-telling of an old story, perhaps influenced by classical models, is a more credible proceeding than the amalgamation of a number of primitive narratives each of which, to judge by the surviving examples, would have enough matter in itself to furnish out an epic. We may then suppose that the ‘Beowulf’ was a conscious, and in its measure successful, effort at epic poetry issuing from that age of the Venerable Bede when England was one of the few territories where Western culture remained secure and active. This in itself is no small boast, for ‘Beowulf,’ in no matter what guise (and that given to it by Professor Strong is not of the most attractive), remains a living and readable poem.

Let us proceed to the poets dealt with by Professor Mackail. In the bulk of his book he cultivates that unpromising field, the eighteenth century, which has been as unwisely adulated as decried. His critical attitude is admirably suited to his purpose. “Commentary of whatever kind,” he says, “is only useful in so far as it throws light on the poetry itself and allows a more unimpeded access to it.” And when he deals with Fanshawe, who, as he says, disputed with Herrick the honour of being the last of the Elizabethans, or with Collins or even with Young or

with Pope himself, he lives up to his own standard. Here are, in their different ways, fine poets, and the fact strikes one afresh when one considers them from the boastful point of view, in the light of Professor Mackail's exposition. No one has better dealt than he (though others have attempted it) with the textbook propagated absurdity of Arnold that Pope is a classic of our prose. He does not merely argue that Pope is a poet: he makes us feel it. And with the much abused, little read Young he is even more effective, or perhaps only seems to be so because effective exposition was so much needed here. All these, under his hand, stand out like figures on the great roll, even if in the same volume he has printed rather superficial papers on Shakespeare and William Morris which have not the same value.

We come at a jump to Gilbert. And, if all the established personages of English literature were rolled into one, with their separate individualities reckoned as moods, would not the mood that is called Gilbert, in its inclusion with the rest, entitle all the world to speak of the mad Englishman? What are we to think of Gilbert, who has enriched our ways of thinking and feeling with the books of comic operas, and has contributed almost as many quotations to our habitual speech as Shakespeare? We may, in the first place, wonder how a man whose intention was always the comic contrived to be so invariably respectable, where most of the comic writers of the world have failed or rather have not tried. His age, no doubt, compelled him, but he had a talent ready to conform. Perhaps, by some process of conversion, he "took out" what was here suppressed in those jokes about elderly ladies seeking for a husband, which are to modern taste the ugliest part of his work. We may remark, in the second place, that more of his operas than is always said consist of almost any sort of words written to be set to music. There is here a great deal of stuff like:

With heart and with voice  
Let us welcome this mating:  
To the youth of her choice,  
With a heart palpitating,  
Comes the lovely Aline!

May their love never cloy!  
May their bliss be unbounded!  
With a halo of joy  
May their lives be surrounded!  
Heaven bless our Aline!

But when these things are said, and even when one has said much more about the unexpectedness of his wit and the neatness of his versification at their best, there remains something in Gilbert, perceptible but inexplicable. You may dislike him (as I rather do), but you cannot dispute that, narrow as were the terms in which he expressed it, he had a comprehensive grasp on the essentials of life. How else, out of the ephemeral trivialities of the aesthetic movement of the 'eighties, could he have made so universal and eternal a satire as 'Patience' which, it seems probable, every age will interpret afresh in its own terms? He was more hidebound by the prejudices of a small-minded time than any other writer who has had so great an effect, but, perhaps because he so whole-heartedly accepted them, he seems to have turned them to his own immortal profit, and when the roll of the glories of English literature is made up his name cannot be omitted. And we, the English, have produced 'Beowulf' and Young's 'Night Thoughts' and Gilbert's 'Patience,' and, from time to time, when the fancy takes us, we are entitled to boast about it.

#### SOCIAL HISTORY

*Home Life under the Stuarts.* By Elizabeth Godfrey. Stanley Paul. 12s. 6d. net.

GOOD use has been made by Miss Godfrey of some of the better known sources of information on the domestic life and education of the cultivated classes in

the reigns of the first two Stuarts. The authoress lacks the charm of style which makes Trevelyan's chapters on the same subject the most fascinating part of a fascinating book. She makes amends, however, by making very liberal quotations from contemporary letters and journals, and these give the work a permanent value. Apart from their intrinsic interest, the details of daily life, from samplers to gardens, help us to preserve a sense of perspective in history and a scholarly and unpretending work like the one before us deserves and should receive a welcome. One criticism, which very naturally suggests itself, is anticipated by the writer—her account is confined to those described in the language of the day as "persons of quality," but, as is explained, numbers of the working classes wrote few letters and no journals, and the economic historians, we may add, have not helped us as much as could be desired. Within its limits, however, this book performs a useful service and will, we hope, send many readers to the originals themselves.

Miss Godfrey begins in the nursery with rattles, sucking bottles, Turkey rhubarb, rhymes and hornbooks. At the age of two years, we read, Betty Verney had a nurse not only to "dres hur" but "to heare hur hur booke, and teche hur hur worke." In Puritan households the rod was in great favour, as children were regarded as children of wrath till they had the devil well whipped out of them. Not all Puritans, however, were so strict, or forbade their offspring the joys of rhymes and games. Of the former many still familiar were already old, such as 'Rain, rain, go to Spain,' 'Sing a Song of Sixpence,' and the interesting:

February Fill-the-dyke,  
Be it black or be it white;  
But if it be white  
It's the better to like.

Out of the nursery boys, if not given a private tutor, were sent to one of the five leading public schools of the day—Winchester, Eton, Westminster, St. Paul's, or Merchant Taylors'. Cricket, we learn, was unknown except perhaps in its infant form of "stool-ball," the three legs of the stool standing for wicket. Football, tennis, rounders and ninepins were the games most played, but we hear no complaints of excessive athleticism. The cost of education in the seventeenth century seems to have been considerably higher than it is to-day if the change in the value of money be taken into account. The two younger sons of the Earl of Cork were sent to Eton and their school bill for three years amounted to £914 3s. 4d., including "diet, apparel, tutelage, and keep of their manservant." The university usually followed at the age of from fourteen to sixteen, but boys were frequently sent as early as twelve.

Mr. Peacham, in the 'Compleat Gentleman,' surveys the various studies which may be undertaken, beginning with 'Stile, and the History of Rhetorick,' which comprised what we call a classical education, and he passes on to Poetry and "Cosmographie." Writing in 1622, he says that poetry "seemeth fallen from the highest stage of honour." He advises the reading of the following:—"Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, Harding, Skelton, Surrey, Wyat—our Phenix the noble Sir Philip Sidney, Mr. Edward Dyer, Mr. Edmund Spencer, Mr. Samuel Daniel, with sundrie others whom, not out of envie but to avoid tediousnesse I over-passe. Thus much of Poetrie." Shakespeare is thus classed with "sundrie others" who might be "over-passed." Music and painting have also their place and the "exercises of the bodie," including riding, running, leaping, tilting, throwing, wrestling, swimming, shooting, and falconry. The subtleties of logic are not recommended—"as it is usually practised [it] enables them for little more than to be excellent wranglers, which art, though it may be tolerable in a mercenary lawyer, I can by no means commend to a sober and well-governed gentleman." Some Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy should also be studied and

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afterwards " arithmetic and geometry in some good measure, but especially arithmetic, it being most useful for many purposes."

On holidays freshmen were required to tell a story round the fire in hall, and if dull the other undergraduates would " tuck " them. Miss Godfrey regrets the absence of an explanation of this bit of seventeenth-century slang. In the eighteenth century it meant (at least at one Oxford College) ripping off the skin with the thumb-nail from lip to chin. Fees, as Miss Godfrey notes, seem to have been at discretion. Edmund Verney writes : " According to your desire I asked Mr. Sessions what it were fit for me to give my Tutors. He told me Mr. Jones gives them £1 5s. the quarter, and that he should advise me to give him the lyke."

The education of girls was not neglected in the seventeenth century, if we may regard Mrs. Hutchinson as a good example. " When I was about seven years of age," she writes, " I remember I had at one time eight tutors in several qualities, languages, music, dancing, writing, and needlework." Dancing was treated very seriously. Girls were taught to hold themselves erect, curtsy low, and bear themselves with dignity and grace as they danced the minuet, pavane or coranto. At a very early age, however, the question of marriage began to be important. Kenelm Digby and Venetia Stanley, indeed, began their courtship in the nursery, and Lady Mary Villiers was not only wife but widow at the age of eight. Marriage at thirteen was common and after a year or two of education a girl would live with her husband. Commonly these marriages were arranged by parents and they seem to have turned out at least as well on the average as marriages for love. The large family of the Earl of Cork affords many instances of early " arranged " marriages. One daughter was married at the age of thirteen, a second was left a widow at fourteen. Under the influence of his wife Charles I seems sometimes to have acted as matchmaker. Sir Thomas Stafford, the queen's gentleman-usher, wished to marry his step-daughter to one of Lord Cork's sons who was aged fifteen. The King virtually ordered Lord Cork to give way and the marriage duly took place, the latter recording in his diary that Charles himself gave the bride away and conducted her to the bedchamber, " where the queen with her own hands did help to undress her. And his Majesty and the Queen both stayed in the bedchamber till they saw my son and his wife in bed together, and they both kissed the bride and blessed them as I did."

Miss Godfrey concludes her volume of gossip, as she modestly calls it, with a pleasant chapter on gardens, and the names of their flowers and fruits in the seventeenth century—one variety of " stocke-gilloflower " was known as the " melancholick gentleman," clematis is " virgin o' bower "; then there are " Muske rose " and " Single eglantine," " rasps, currans, and apricocks " and strawberries, eaten " as a rare service whereunto claret wine, cream or milke is added with sugar as everyone liketh. They are good for perturbation of the spirits." We are tempted to linger in these parades and plesances, but we trust we have sufficiently illustrated the kind of fare readers of this book will find.

#### ALBANY

*Paradise in Piccadilly.* By Harry Furniss. The Bodley Head. 12s. 6d. net.

THIS is so agreeable a book that only with reluctance do we bring ourselves to describe it as a piece of book-making. Yet that is what it is, and evidence of the casual way in which the late Mr. Furniss went about making the volume is supplied not only by repetitions and some irrelevancies but by the contrast between the two chapters in which he had assistance and the rest. It is not because we natur-

ally feel a special interest in the pages which record the SATURDAY REVIEW'S sojourn of thirty-eight years in Albany that we prefer that portion of the book to the pleasant enough but rather vague and indiscriminating chapters in which Byron, " Monk " Lewis, Macaulay, and other famous residents are presented. What is most needed in books which parade celebrities for our entertainment is a nice feeling for the distinguishing qualities of each, the feeling for character which made, for instance, Mr. G. S. Street's singularly unpretentious book on the 'Ghosts of Piccadilly' so remarkable a success. Now, when Mr. Hannay guides the pen of Mr. Harry Furniss, or takes it from him, the people come alive : Beresford Hope, our founder, Harwood (of whom there is an admirable portrait), Venables, and the rest of the SATURDAY REVIEWERS of the 'fifties, 'sixties and 'seventies, however rapid the sketch, are there with some at least of their idiosyncrasies. The reader really gets an insight into the mind of Venables when he is given Sir William Harcourt's indelicate metaphor descriptive of that great leader-writer's style. But when Mr. Furniss is dealing with Byron or Bulwer Lytton, there is no pungency in the portraiture, though in fairness we must add that he was happily inspired in quoting Carlyle or Macaulay.

The chambers, G.1, from which we unhappily withdrew in 1893, have kept ever since an association with literature; for no sooner did we vacate them than Mr. John Lane took them, and, turning a dining-room window into an entrance, evaded the restriction on business in Albany and achieved an address in Vigo Street. The Bodley Head has made literary history there: it might have been better chronicled than by giving long lists of the guests it entertained. But everything must be forgiven Mr. Furniss, because he loved Albany, and writes of it, however carelessly, as a lover. Not everyone can share that devotion to the unique place of residence which, more than a century ago, Copland made out of the mansion of the Duke

of York and Albany, and which, alone of all sets of chambers in London, is secured against damaging change, by its peculiar constitution and government by trustees. To some people it seems rather unnaturally withdrawn from the life of London moving past it in Piccadilly, without being sufficiently secluded for London to be forgotten. But there are many who love it so much that they will resent the admission by Mr. Furniss that the "Rope Walk" is ugly. In itself, perhaps; in relation to the whole, no. And the steady demand for chambers, through all variations of taste, is proof that the attraction of Albany is permanent. Minor amenities once offered have had to be scrapped. The early attempts to carry on a restaurant in the lower rooms were ruinous. But the chambers which delighted men so different as Byron and Macaulay long ago, Beerbohm Tree and Sir Squire Bancroft in our day, keep their fascination, though no one can now secure for ninety guineas a year what Macaulay proudly described as an address of which a Duke's younger son would not be ashamed. Macaulay, apart from the tablet known to every visitor, has his memorial in Albany, in the iron gates erected at his instance against burglars, of whom he had been warned in a hoaxing letter written by his niece.

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'THE HOUSEMAID' is a novel in the Victorian tradition. Like 'Vanity Fair' and 'Anna Karéniina' it has two plots, two separate stories almost running side by side. Their ultimate confluence is mainly accidental; indeed the device by which Miss Royde-Smith is to make her parallels meet throughout the story gives rise to much pleasant speculation. Artificial aids to interest are by no means to be despised: the honest reader who does not skip can, with the shifting of the scene, enjoy the deferred delights of the serial story. The suspense, the sense of momentousness which comes with such sentences as "The water was already up to Miriam's chin. And now let us return to Annabella," cannot be generated any other way; by no other method can the illusion of the lapse of time be so successfully created. While, with a sigh, we return to Annabella's more humdrum history we have leisure to reflect upon the extremity of Miriam's plight: she comes into focus, her melancholy circumstances dislodge themselves and ripen in the mind; so that when in good time we return to her she is twice the woman she was.

Miss Royde-Smith, however, employs a modified antiphony. First comes the story of Annie, Ann, and Walmisly, three names denoting three stages of one housemaid's promotion. Pendent to this is the romance between Ann's husband and his friend's ward. It is natural that the novel at this stage should lead a double life and maintain, as it were, two establishments. Then comes the great divorce; the Sherlocks, with their lands and titles, their passionate interest in Mexican archaeology, their irritable or tepid interest in each other, their complicated love affairs, have little enough in common with the staid single-minded family in Highbury New Park. Finally, in one delirious day, the three skeins get gloriously mixed up, and when they come apart they are much the worse for wear.

So much for Miss Royde-Smith's very interesting experiment in method. Rigidity, which is its defect, is also its merit. The three themes are not subtly intertwined; they are developed separately and then thrown at each other, the transition being harsh and abrupt. They do not embrace, they collide; but out of the collision come all the vivid contrasts of a delayed juxtaposition, a sense of doom and confusion suggesting a minor Judgment Day. The catastrophe of the burning theatre strengthens the idea of finality without which we could scarcely believe in Michel Sherlock's change of heart. The dominating personality of the book, he shows an unlovely obstinacy of character and a self-absorption which almost put him beyond sympathy. Indeed, compared with the leisurely development of the housemaid's history the treatment of the Sherlocks with all their apparatus of relations seems unduly telescoped and condensed. They are slightly petrified, frozen into attitudes like the Mexican statues to which Michel subordinated everything, especially his wife. At times he appears de-personated, as though he were a part of his own selfishness instead of his selfishness being part of him. But the characters, even if they move stiffly, do respond to circumstances; we see the charming Griselda coarsening and hardening under the knowledge which Michel's monstrous neglect of his wife forced upon her. But on the whole it is true to say that when Miss Royde-Smith's humour and irony have to be laid aside her sense of direction grows inexact; she is a little at sea in her own serious-

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habit or as an inglorious form of sport than because it is anywhere a serious pest, he has given a sober and sympathetic account of Brock's career in that westernmost extremity of Cornwall which forms his invariable setting. The photographic illustrations are a job lot collected from all kinds of sources, and though several are good in themselves the united effect is incongruous and unsatisfactory. Any competent artist would have illustrated the book very much better: in a beast which (as the writer himself emphasizes) never in normal circumstances lets itself be seen above ground by daylight the limitations of the camera are uncommonly severe. The index also is so incomplete that it would have been better left out; but in spite of these minor failings 'The Life Story of a Badger' can hardly disappoint the many readers whom the earlier life stories of the hare and of the otter won for Mr. Tregarthen.

## ACROSTICS PUBLISHER'S PRIZE

For the Acrostic Competition there is a weekly prize:—A Book (selected by the competitor) reviewed in that issue of the SATURDAY REVIEW in which the problem was set, presented by the publisher.

### RULES

1. The price of the book chosen must not exceed a guinea; it must be named by the solver when he sends his solution, and be published by a firm whose name appears on the list printed on the Competition Coupon.

2. *The coupon for the week must be enclosed.*

3. Envelopes must be marked "Competition," and addressed to the Acrostic Editor, SATURDAY REVIEW, 9 King Street, London, W.C.2.

Competitors not complying with these Rules will be disqualified.

Awards of Prizes.—When solutions are of equal merit, the result will be decided by lot.

*Under penalty of disqualification, competitors must intimate their choice of book when sending solutions, which must reach us not later than the Friday following publication.*

*To avoid the same book being chosen twice, books mentioned in "New Books at a Glance" (which, in many instances, are reviewed at length in a subsequent issue of the paper) are not eligible as prizes.*

### DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 208

GREATER AND LESSER: ONE IS IN THE EAST,  
THE OTHER, A CELESTIAL FEMALE BEAST.

- Hoofs, whole or cloven, are our point of pride.
- Greece took my horses: in my camp I died.
- Austere his life: in Persia he's respected.
- By Sultans for high offices selected.
- "You are the mid-day flower?" You rightly guess!
- Abridge the spiral tongue that moths possess.
- His was "the red fool fury of the Seine."
- Sheet folded once, yea twice, and yet again.
- The grants are passed: that I must bleed is plain!

#### Solution of Acrostic No. 208.

B	al	M
O	bservanc	E
T	rimurt	I
T	hesauru	S
I	ndustriou	S
C	arg	O
E	vaporatio	N
L	emon-kal	I
L	ucrativ	E
I	ncubato	R

ACROSTIC No. 206.—The winner is the Rev. J. Wallace Kidston, 3 Pembroke Gardens, W.8, who has selected as his

## THE FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW

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The Coal Question. By David Brownlie  
Recollections of Famous Huntsmen. By H. A. Bryden  
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prize 'London's Lost Theatres of the Nineteenth Century,' by Errol Sherson, published at The Bodley Head and reviewed in our columns on February 13 under the title 'Lights that Failed.' Thirty-six other competitors chose this book, 26 named 'By the Waters of Carthage,' 20 'A History of Roumania,' etc., etc.

**ALSO CORRECT.**—Baldersby, Barberry, A. de V. Blathwayt, Bolo, Mrs. J. Butler, Carlton, Miss Carter, Sir Wm. Chevis, A. R. N. Cowper-Coles, Lionel Cresswell, Dinkie, Doric, E. K. P., Farsdon, Gay, Jop, Miss Kelly, Lar, John Lennie, Lillian, Madge, Margaret, L. M. Maxwell, H. de R. Morgan, F. Sheridan Lea, Novocrete, Oakapple, Peter, Shorwell, Sisyphus, Still Waters, Trike, Twyford, Tyro, Varach, View, C. J. Warden, Capt. W. R. Wolseley, Zero, Zyk.

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**TWO LIGHTS WRONG.**—Armadale, Beechworth, Beatrice Bradly, Maud Crowther, Darenth, P. S. Dealtry, Dhault, D. L., East Sheen, Gunton, Lieut.-Col. Sir Wolseley Haig, Claudia Jones, Stanfield, J. Sutton, Mrs. Whitaker. All others more.

For Light 2 Obeisance and Office are accepted.

**L. CRESSWELL.**—I cannot agree that any of the other words in your list fit Light 7 nearly as well as Evaporation. As "Shorwell" observes: "Without evaporation there could be no rainfall, and without rain all life would soon come to an end."

**A. E. K. WHERRY.**—No need to thank me for "awarding" you the prize! Which of those who solve an acrostic correctly shall be the winner is entirely a matter of chance.

**G. W. MILLER.**—I always give the preference to easy words, but it is impossible for me to know which words solvers will find easy and which not. I should not have thought that Talapoin and Lemon-kali were at all difficult, especially the latter.

## MOTORING WEIGHT AND ECONOMY

BY H. THORNTON RUTTER

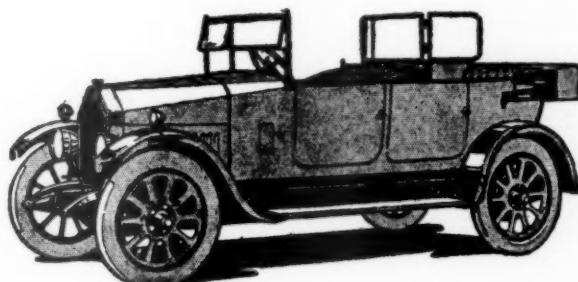
FOR as long as motor-cars have existed there has been a battle between the designers of them and the public which uses them. On the one hand the engineer has cudgelled his brains to lighten the engine and chassis and even the coachwork, if only by a few ounces, and straightway has seen all his long-thought-out plans frustrated by the buyer adding many pounds to the complete vehicle by fanciful accessories. The technical expert knows that the three important features of a road vehicle are power, weight, and gear ratio. To-day motor engines develop remarkable power from small and large units alike. Further, the motor engineer has reduced the weight of his engine so that the power to weight ratio is excellent. Yet when even 1,500 c.c. cars are taken as examples, weighing about one ton, each single cubic centimetre of engine cylinder capacity has to transport one and a half pounds—and these are called light cars! Consequently, while the engineer is doing his best to produce an engine of light weight, developing by high speed of its revolutions per minute a large amount of power force compared with its size, and cut down weight in the rest of the construction in order to produce a nice acceleration, much of his work is wasted because the car is asked to carry considerably more weight than it is theoretically designed for. I use the word theoretically advisedly, for in actual practice almost every private motor-car, goods wagon, or public service vehicle from motor-omnibus to taxi-cab, successfully carries an overload. This spoils the economical working of the vehicle, of whatever type

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it may be, for additional weight needs the use of lower gears in climbing ascents, and consequently more fuel. This applies more to the private car than the goods wagon, as the latter is content, as a rule, to go slower if necessary and lose the better acceleration which a lighter load would permit, while the private owner expects his car to travel equally fast whether he has one ton or two tons aboard.

\* \* \*

If his car does not travel as quickly with a heavy load, he grumbles at the want of acceleration of the engine, when in truth he should blame himself for asking it to perform impossible tasks. Here is the point at which the gear ratio comes into action. The lighter the load carried, the higher the final back-axle gear ratio may be; so that if a car can accelerate well on top gear carrying one ton, when a ton and a half is on board a lower gear must be used to reach the same acceleration. Therefore more gear-changing has to be done on heavily than on lightly loaded cars. This is a point that sometimes escapes an inexperi-

enced driver. As a rule, when he discovers that his car does not "pull" as well as he fancies it ought to, he begins to dismantle his engine to see if anything is wrong. He may have forgotten that a new rear screen he has fitted, or the fact that the side-curtains are up, or the hood raised, increases the wind resistance and thus adds weight for the engine to pull. One assumes that the carburettor gives a sufficiently rich mixture of petrol and air to develop its greatest power when the throttle is wide open; also that the ignition is advanced as the speed of the engine increases. This must not be confused with the road speed of the vehicle; although it may be synonymous when the engine is running in top gear, the vehicle is often travelling at comparatively slow speeds while the engine is turning over very fast when indirect gears are in mesh for climbing ascents. All these points being in order, there remains only the weight carried as a factor to consider for an improved performance. Which brings one back to the old axiom that it is loads which count in all transport operations.

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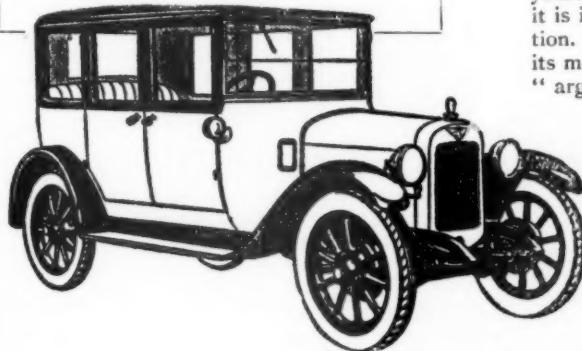
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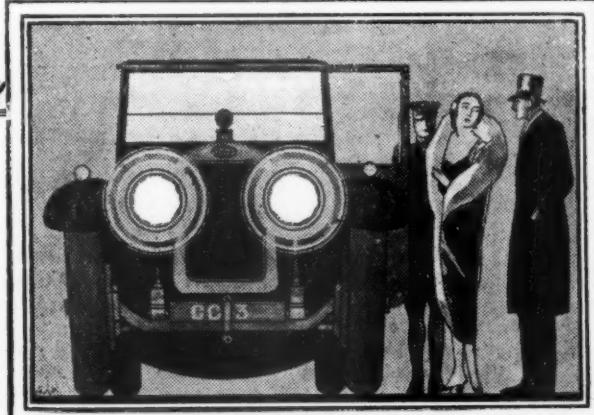
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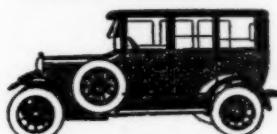
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## CITY NOTES

*Lombard Street, Thursday*

I HAVE frequently mentioned in these notes a growing evil in the form of outside stockbrokers of an undesirable type and worthless share selling institutions. My attention has been drawn to the subject again this week by Mr. Waldron Smithers, M.P. for the Chislehurst division of Kent, who, having raised the question in the House of Commons, is now enlisting the aid of the Press in his campaign against these very undesirable elements. While I agree with Mr. Smithers that it is imperative that steps should be taken to curb what amounts to a constant drain on the savings of a large number of people, I am not certain that a public exposure of the evil is sufficient. It is admitted that through ignorance a large number of people invest their money in impossible propositions put forward by unscrupulous people, and enter into stock and share transactions with firms who never intend to pay if the necessity arises; and it is a natural assumption that the more the dangers of these proceedings are written of in the Press, the less likely is it that victims will be found. But this, I feel, is merely a deterrent, not a cure. The position as I see it is that the undesirable element advertises extensively while the genuine stockbroker is debarred from even publishing a business card in a financial paper. If members of the Stock Exchange were allowed to advertise in some form or another the losses incurred by the public through dealing with sharks would, in my opinion, disappear. I am convinced there are thousands of people in this country who are desirous of investing money, or, let it be whispered, of indulging in a mild speculation who do not know of a genuine stockbroker to employ. The result is that they treat at face value the circulars they receive. The arguments against stockbrokers advertising are many, the most important being that the large firms would have the advantage over the small ones in that they would be able to advertise on a more lavish scale. I do not think that this would be the result. The big firms do not want the small business that advertisements would bring in, and it is improbable that they would indulge in great expenditure in order to attract it. In making these suggestions I hold no brief for the London and Provincial Stock Exchange: I am merely actuated by the desire to assist the public. Mr. Waldron Smithers informed me that legislation to meet the case was impossible. I do not entirely agree; for in America laws have been framed to minimize this evil, which unfortunately has led to an influx into this country of large numbers of American share selling touts. It is doubtful if people realize the vast sums of money lost every year by the small investor through these agencies. The small investor who by dint of great effort has saved £50 or £100 entrusts it to one of these undesirable agencies and in a short time finds he has lost his all. He is inclined to blame capitalists as a class for having robbed him of his savings; and this conviction from a political point of view is certainly very undesirable.

## COURTAULDS

The preliminary statement of Courtaulds for 1925 discloses that the profit has risen by some £580,000 and the dividend has been increased to 25% free of tax. On a yield basis at the present price Courtaulds are too high, but in view of the extraordinary strength of the Company and its future possibilities, it is difficult to assess the adequate value of Courtauld shares.

There is one point in reference to Courtaulds' figures which calls for some explanation. Less than a year ago, when the duties on artificial silk were introduced, the Courtaulds Company took a prominent part in protesting against the new taxes. The Courtaulds Company themselves published lengthy protests and pointed out that the imposition of these taxes would cripple what was comparatively a new industry. We now see the result—taxes imposed, and Courtaulds' profits enormously increased. Surely the Company owes the Chancellor an apology.

## INTERNATIONAL PULP

Early this week an issue of preference shares was made by the International Pulp and Chemical Company, Ltd. This issue is of outstanding interest inasmuch as the Company had been formed to acquire the controlling interest in the German Koholyt Company whose works are believed to constitute one of the largest organizations for the production of high grade chemical pulp in the world. The new Company owes its inception to the Inveresk Paper Company, Ltd., who acquired the shares in the German concern in the first place and passed them over to the new Company. The operation was rendered possible by the difficulties which beset the German Company after the war and the collapse of the Stinnes group. In pre-war days the complaint was frequently heard that too many British enterprises were in German hands. Now that the Potash Syndicate of Germany is being financed from this country and many other German commercial undertakings are coming over here for their finances, the position has certainly been reversed.

## AN ATTRACTIVE TIN SHARE

Tin has risen to over £290 a ton. Tin shares have failed to respond to this, but I cannot help feeling that more interest will be shown in this market in the reasonably near future. I would draw special attention to the South Crofty Company. South Crofty, which is, in my opinion, the premier tin mine in Cornwall, is a regular dividend payer, shareholders receiving 5% every quarter, and the shares, which have a denomination of 5s., now stand at about 9s. In view of the fact that South Crofty does not distribute all its profits, that the management is in most capable hands, and that I am informed recent developments have been very satisfactory, I consider these shares an exceptionally attractive mining investment.

## DISTILLERS

The Distillers Company, by its absorption with Buchanan, Dewar, Ltd., and Johnny Walker and Company, has now established a virtual monopoly of the whisky trade. This should result in greatly reduced costs and those other advantages which accrue to a strong combination. I learn that the Company will shortly introduce an entirely new by-product from which a substantial profit can be expected. The consumption of whisky last year, I understand, showed a decided falling off. But despite this fact, in view of the above factors I consider Distiller shares at the present level of 56s. 6d. a sound industrial investment.

## COTTON SHARES

I have on two or three occasions of late referred to Sudan Plantations. The shares of this Company continue in demand, as do those of the Parana Plantations, and I would emphasize the fact that neither of these shares should be sold, as in due course they should go substantially higher.

TAURUS

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Company Meeting

## The Underground Electric Railways Company of London, Limited

The Annual Meeting of Proprietors was held at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W.1, on Thursday last. The Right Hon. Lord Ashfield presided.

In moving the adoption of the report and accounts,

The Chairman said: My Lords, ladies and gentlemen,—The years seem to pass quickly, and once more I find myself engaged in the task of explaining to you why it is that the affairs of your Companies are not so prosperous as we all could wish, and why you are still without that reasonable return upon the capital invested in these undertakings to which you are entitled. For you must have realized from the reports and accounts of the several Companies which have already been posted to you, and which I trust that following our usual custom you will take as read, that once more we have experienced an unsatisfactory year. This is a disappointment for you, but a much greater one for us, who are responsible for conducting the affairs of your Companies. It is especially disappointing when, as you will have observed from the statistical supplement which accompanied the reports and accounts, in what is easily a record year, there was a gross income of over £14,000,000, out of which there remained a balance of only £825,000 available for dividends upon a total ordinary capital of £19,750,000. This result, when measured either by the capital invested in the undertakings or by the volume and importance of the work performed, provides indeed a meagre reward and, as I have already said, is discouraging to everybody concerned.

Yet, while we have failed to secure quite as much traffic as we need to meet your fair claims as shareholders, the traffic of Greater London has continued to grow. Let me draw your attention to the results of the five Companies, as disclosed in the statistical supplements. In 1921, the volume of passengers which we carried reached its lowest point in the depression consequent upon the war. They then numbered 1,100 millions. Since then they have increased year by year until this year they reached the record total of 1,555 millions, an increase of over 41 per cent. in the brief space of four years. If we turn to the estimates made for the passenger traffic of Greater London as a whole, the progress is somewhat similar though somewhat less good. Starting with the year 1921 again, there was in that year a total passenger movement by train, tram, and omnibus of 2,911 millions, which grew steadily year by year to an expected total of 3,687 millions in 1925, an increase of 27 per cent. in the four years, and the equivalent of 482 rides per head of the population for that year. New York still beats us with 543 rides per head of the population.

It must seem puzzling to you that out of so vast a volume of traffic, of which your five Companies carry no less than 42 per cent., it is not possible to secure an adequate margin of income to meet the needs of the capital invested. Yet the bald fact remains that not only this group of Companies, but all the other undertakings engaged in London traffic are little content with their present financial position. Nevertheless, I grow more and more convinced, as the traffic grows in volume, that given a reasonable measure of co-ordination between the various interests engaged in carrying this traffic, there can be no question but that, at the present level of fares, there is a sufficient volume of traffic already in existence to support all the traffic facilities which London needs for its adequate and comfortable movement, with some margin available for further developments.

If we turn now to the work which your Companies have performed for the benefit of the passengers which they carry, we shall see one reason why the great progress which we have made has not brought us any real satisfaction. The measure of the work done is the car-mileage. In 1921 we ran 144 million car-miles, and each year this car-mileage, including both trains and omnibuses, has increased at a slightly faster rate than that of the traffic, until we come to this year 1925, when we ran 209½ million car-miles. This year passengers and mileage, as you will see if you make the calculation, advanced for the first time at approximately the same rate—namely, 7 per cent. Yet in the four years, while passengers increased by just over 41 per cent., car-mileage increased by almost 45 per cent., so that over the period, for one cause or another, we have not been able to work our services as efficiently as we could wish.

There are several causes which have led up to this situation. So far as the railways are concerned, we have added to the route mileage operated for one thing, but in the main we have improved the services upon all lines by working the trains at closer intervals with the object of making our services as attractive as possible. So far as motor omnibuses are concerned, we have been compelled to augment our services without regard to other forms of transport, owing to the rapid increase in the number of independently owned buses which have been placed upon the streets. Unfortunately, we have not been free agents in this matter of services, for we have been compelled to look to the future to the neglect of the immediate position of your Companies, and to anticipate the growth of London traffic as a whole. Thus there is, I feel, this consolation, that

generally speaking we have now established services capable of dealing with a larger volume of passengers during many hours of the day than we are now carrying. As 1925 is better, on the whole, than 1924, so we may look with some certainty, in existing circumstances, to 1926 being better than 1925. At any rate, the present year starts with an improved position when compared with last year.

While the last five years have been distinguished by a considerable rise in the total volume of traffic carried, there has been throughout these years a steady drift of traffic from the railways to the omnibuses. In 1921 your railways carried 339 millions of passengers. In 1924 the number had fallen as low as 298 millions, while in 1925, in spite of their increased route mileage and improved facilities, they carried only 319 millions, or still 20 millions less than in 1921. What we need for the re-establishment of our financial position as a group of Companies is an increase in the number of passengers carried by our railways; and while there are indications in recent months of some improvement, the numbers must be greatly increased before we can regard the situation as satisfactory.

I hardly need remind you of the programme of extensions and improvements to which, with your approval, we committed ourselves two or three years ago. The various works have been carried on with all convenient despatch this year. Some are completed, and we are hopeful that by the middle of the present year they will all be completed, except the Piccadilly Circus Station. We have spent during the year 1925 over £3,000,000. We have still to spend, to complete that programme, £2,000,000. Although we are proceeding with a large number of minor works of betterment, we have refrained from committing ourselves to any fresh programme of substantial alterations and extensions, and, as you will see from the reports, our further commitments are quite modest, amounting to £716,000. We have, however, not felt it wise to omit the study of the developments which are being pressed upon us by the conditions of our operation, and the congestion of our traffic. The Metropolitan District Railway serves an area in Western London which is showing signs of rapid housing development. It would be unfortunate if we should be unable to add to our train services to meet the demands of the traffic.

Now let me ask you your consideration, for a few moments, of the figures for last year, and I will explain the policy which has dictated the resolutions as to dividends which I have to put to you on behalf of the respective Boards. The traffic receipts of the five companies for 1925 are £13,244,000, or £474,000 more than they were in 1924. The expenditure is £11,088,000, or only £269,000 more, so that net receipts are £2,155,000 or £205,000 more than they were a year ago. Miscellaneous receipts net at £834,000 are £34,000 greater, so that the net income is altogether £239,000 greater than it was last year. On the other hand, a further proportion of the redeemable second debenture stock has become chargeable against revenue with the completion and opening of new works, so that interest, rental and fixed charges require £164,000 more. After making this provision, there was still available £75,000 more than there was a year ago. A year ago, it will be remembered, we curtailed the sum set aside for reserves for contingencies and renewals by £185,000. This was an unfortunate necessity of our position. We have, therefore, thought fit to restore £50,000 to this appropriation on behalf of the London General Omnibus Company. The post-war fleet of omnibuses is now almost complete. It has cost a great deal of money, and it is essential we should resume our efforts to build up adequate reserves for its renewal in due course.

The dividends on Guaranteed and Preference Stocks are unchanged over the two years, so that when all deductions are made there is a balance available for dividends on the Ordinary Shares of £825,000, or £25,000 more than was available a year ago out of the operating results of the year. In spite of this, we are asking you to consent to some slight reduction in the dividends paid upon two of the Railway Companies. Last year, when we found ourselves in difficulties, we had hopes that they would quickly pass. We expected relief from the London Traffic Act to come speedily. That relief has only come slowly. Last year, therefore, we felt justified in drawing upon the amount carried forward in our accounts to sustain our dividends at the previous year's level, and although we had only £800,000 to distribute, we, in fact, distributed £875,000, reducing the amounts carried forward by £75,000 in consequence. We have not thought it wise to repeat this subtraction from our resources, so we have determined upon some small modifications in the dividends which we are recommending to you for approval. In consequence, although we have earned £825,000 which we can distribute, we are actually distributing £808,000 only, and the amounts carried forward, taken collectively, are increased by £17,000. It is a conservative policy, but we suggest in your best interests.

# South Metropolitan Gas Company

The ordinary general meeting of the proprietors of the SOUTH METROPOLITAN GAS COMPANY was held on February 24 at the Cannon Street Hotel, London, Mr. Charles Carpenter, D.Sc., M.Inst.C.E. (the President) presiding.

He said: Ladies and gentlemen, in my remarks upon the report of the company's working during the past twelve months, I propose to depart from my usual custom of taking these serially in order to refer to a matter which has caused some perturbation in the minds of certain shareholders—I mean the Government electricity proposals dealt with in Paragraph 7. We will, therefore, get this out of our way now so that we can then give our undivided attention to the satisfactory year through which the undertaking has passed.

In the first place I want to endeavour to make clear to you what I understand the main proposal of the Government to be, for I cannot but think a good deal of misapprehension exists with regard to it. The subject is somewhat technical, so, to make it clearer, I will take an example from our railways. In the design and working of a railway system the following are three important points that have to be borne in mind, namely, the dimension of the track or running gauge, the dimension of the structure gauge, that is the height and width of the tunnel and platforms, etc., and, lastly, that of the loading gauge, that is the height and width of the coaches and other rolling stock. When railways were in the early stages of their development there was no uniformity on any of these points, and this continued until comparatively recent times. England in those days was not organized as a military country, but relied for defence almost wholly upon its insularity and its fleet. Fortunately, when the Great War broke out, as regards running gauge the defect of ununiformity had been corrected between the companies themselves in order to obtain the advantage of inter-changeability and through running. In other words, the companies voluntarily carried out a change which to-day the Government would have no doubt insisted upon in the interests of national security by making the normal, or 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge a universal one. The importance of that achievement was that with certain restrictions in respect of loading gauge, men and munitions could be transported on rolling stock that was usable throughout the length and breadth of the country served by the railway system.

Now I must say a word about the generation of electric energy, in connection with which also a good deal of misunderstanding appears to be present in the public mind. Currents of electric energy, such as are in use to-day all over the world depend for their production upon phenomena discovered and examined by Michael Faraday. He found that if one of the extremities or poles of an ordinary bar magnet was thrust into, though not touching, a coil of copper wire, a transient current lasting about as long as the magnet was being moved was produced, or induced, as he himself called it, in the coil of wire. When the magnet was withdrawn a similar transient current, but flowing in the opposite direction to the first, was likewise induced in the coil of wire. Each current began to flow with the motion of the magnet, reached its maximum, and then died away.

Now if the magnet were inserted into and withdrawn from the coil, say fifty times per second, then a current changing its magnitude as well as the direction of its flow cyclically 50 times per second would be induced in the coil. Such a current is termed an alternating current of 50 cycles. As regards the magnitude of the current, this depends upon, amongst other things, the strength of the magnet used to induce the current. Moreover, by a simple device, the two currents may be selected and made to flow in one direction only, when they become continuous instead of alternating. So that you may have this state of affairs. You may have electric undertakings all over the country generating and putting into their mains currents not necessarily of the 50 cycle alternating kind I have taken as an example, but of more or fewer cycles, of greater or lesser magnitude or voltage, some continuous and others alternating.

The directors' report opens with a statement as to the demands for and the uses of gas. It is very gratifying that the building operations which are now going on are bringing us fresh customers, a large proportion of these being the kind most useful to us—that is, where gas is used for lighting as well as cooking and heating. We owe this almost entirely to the replacement of upright by inverted burners, which not only greatly reduce the breakage and cost of mantles, but give considerably increased efficiency.

Besides, it is a pleasant light to read and work by, a quality which is not lost even in the thousand candle power lamps which are so popular in South London shopping centres.

Now I want to say a few words as to our Act of last year, to the promotion of which you assented twelve months ago, Parliament has again shown its confidence in us by giving us an extension of what I prefer to call the Charter of working it granted in 1920. Capital is now safeguarded as regards payment for its use, and in addition the whole undertaking and everyone concerned in the undertaking is encouraged to do his or her best to sell gas at the lowest possible price. It is in a low

price for gas that our strength is founded, and stress cannot be laid upon that fundamental fact too strongly or too often. You will remember that by the Act we are entitled to divide our surplus of profit in the proportion of three-fourths to the consumer by way of reduction in the price of gas, and the other fourth equally between Capital and Labour. Your portion as shareholders is for last year an additional 1 per cent. plus £10,000 carried to Reserve for future use or investment. Now last year's Act went a step further than the previous one, inasmuch as it conferred for the first time, I believe, upon a gas undertaking, powers commonly enjoyed in other branches of the commercial and industrial world.

I may remind you that in conjunction with one of the best known chemical firms on the Continent we bought from the Government for a large sum a chemical works adapted for the manufacture of those finer tar products of which Germany had the monopoly before the war. It was not foreseen that most nations would set to work to provide their own requirements, but that was what happened, and this experience has been shared by many others.

Now there was another tendency made manifest in industry consequent upon the war, namely, the amalgamation of various undertakings into one huge concern and under one managing Board. I believe, as did the late Sir George Livesey, that although it is unquestionable that industrial operations may become uneconomical because of the small scale upon which they are worked, yet there is something like an optimum size.

Our new Act has been drafted to enable these to be enjoyed by associating interests without thereby losing individuality on the part of either undertaking, or of goodwill of either personnel. We are now entitled to enter into capital arrangements with other undertakings, in return for which there can be exchanged not only manufacturing and supply facilities, but the special knowledge resulting from investigation and research, which can only obtain where the business is large enough to justify the cost of a properly-equipped investigating and research staff. Two or more undertakings may be thus allied in efforts to bring down costs and improve results, and thereby reduce the price of gas, which, as I have before stated, is vital to the continued success of our business. We have to-day no monopoly in the supply of either light, heat or power, and we exist because we can give a supply of these requirements more cheaply and conveniently than can otherwise be obtained.

Let me give an example of how such an association I have described could be carried out. We would take over, say, one-half of the ordinary stock of the associating company. In that way we should be deeply interested in its successful working, and any general raising of the level of prosperity resulting therefrom would be shared by the holders of the other half of this same stock. In consideration for the stock so taken over we would issue stock of an agreed equivalent value and denomination. The same board of directors and the same administration, the same general managers and officials, would continue, and, not least important, the particular privileges of the employees, which have grown up in one respect or another around each company as a nucleus, would be maintained undisturbed and intact. The individuality of each undertaking would be thereby maintained, while each would be strengthened by association with the other. I cannot think that a scheme of that kind could fail to appeal to gas shareholders where such arrangements are possible and applicable. It would certainly be free from the disadvantages of some amalgamations of which I have knowledge, where in some instances these have been costly and in some others have not yielded the advantages to obtain which they were promoted.

In conclusion, I should like to pay a tribute none the less sincere because customary to the satisfactory working of our co-partnership. There is nothing peculiar to the gas industry in the achievement of this result, and I am sure that with the will of masters and men co-partnership could be applied to coal mining if the attempt were seriously made. During the last strike no coal was raised in England for over three months, and it cost this company £350,000. Extend those figures over the whole community, and it will be seen that no country, however prosperous once, could stand up to a continuance of such attacks upon it. Our own co-partnership has been established for well over a third of a century, but I believe that it is only now on the eve of demonstrating to the full all that can be achieved by it. Just as adversity tests friendship, so competition tests industry. This with us is growing keener day by day, and I believe your staff and employees will rise under its stimulus to a standard of efficiency not yet imagined in the industry with which it is associated, and that this company will continue to play its part in the economic development of gas supply during the present century as it so conspicuously succeeded in doing during the last. I have much pleasure in moving: "That the report and accounts now presented be received and adopted, and the report entered on the minutes."

Mr. Frank H. Jones, M.Inst.C.E. (Vice-Chairman) seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

Company Meeting**BOVRIL LTD.****A SUCCESSFUL YEAR**

Presiding at the twenty-ninth annual general meeting of BOVRIL, LIMITED, Sir George Lawson Johnston (chairman) congratulated the shareholders on having had another successful year.

With their permission, he would take the report as read, and then proceed to deal with some of the more important changes in the accounts that had occurred during the last year.

Turning to the debtor side of the balance sheet, they would find the alterations in the capital consequent on the share issues made during 1925. Of the 6 per cent. preference, there are now one million one pound shares, as against 750,000; the 7½ per cent. ordinary shares will stand at one million, but there are now one million deferred shares of £1 each, in place of 750,000 in the previous balance-sheet.

**PROFITS TRANSFERRED BY LAW FROM DEFERRED TO PREFERRED SHAREHOLDERS**

For some years the company had been paying the deferred dividend free of income-tax, but it was highly probable that, in future, they would pay it less tax. The question of the amount of income-tax to be deducted had become rather complicated, owing to a rebate now received against income-tax paid in the Irish Free State. This came under the same heading as income-tax paid in the Dominions. As the law stood, any income-tax paid in the Dominions up to half the amount of income-tax in England could be got back when paying income-tax here, that is to say, if 2s. in the £ were paid in the Dominions, that rebate would be received on paying 4s. here. The payment of the income-tax overseas came out of the company's profits, and therefore out of the sum available for deferred dividend, but, nevertheless, according to the law, any rebate received must be distributed to all the shareholders. This, therefore, became a little bonus paid to the prior issues at the expense of the deferred shareholders.

Sir George said he had carefully read through the case in the Court of Appeal of Sheldrick v. South African Breweries, as reported in the *Law Journal Reports*, and had no doubt whatever that the learned gentlemen who decided the matter in the Court of Appeal were, so far as the law of the land was concerned, absolutely correct, but what surprised him was that there was no mention whatever of the lack of equity in thus taking from the deferred, or last, shareholder and giving to the prior issues. In their case, at present it was only a small amount that was thus passed from one group of shareholders to the others.

As a matter of fact, the actual deductions on the Bovril dividend forms this time would be 3s. 6½d. off the preference and ordinary, whilst 3s. 8d. would have been the deduction in the case of the deferred if the dividend had not been paid tax free.

If income-tax were paid in the Dominions to the extent of a sum equal to 2s. in the £, it would mean a reduction in the profits available for the deferred of over 1 per cent., and when the rebate came it would have to be passed on to all the shareholders. Thus preference and ordinary would have 2s. in the £ deducted instead of 4s., and the ordinary dividend of 7½ per cent. would become equivalent to 8½ per cent. In companies where the prior shares are proportionately greater than the deferred, there would be a greater transference of profit from the deferred to the prior issues. It seemed to him that the people who were saved inconvenience by this arrangement were the income-tax collectors, and no doubt the law was made for their benefit, as they thus avoided all risk of having to make a full 4s. in the £ rebate to any preference shareholders of small means.

From the point of view of the department in a company that worked out the dividend warrants, it was difficult to imagine a legal ruling that could be more inconvenient. In the first place, as preference dividends were usually paid half-yearly, and not necessarily out of the profits of the year, such payment was often made before the rate of relief was known. Sometimes provisional relief had to be given even on the final dividend and the matter adjusted later, and, seeing that the rebate usually ran into fractions, he could not think of any scheme better calculated to give more work with very little real benefit, unless, during the present period of unemployment, it could be held to be a benefit to give employment of this type, even if the work was of little value.

**REMARKABLE TRANSPORT COSTS**

In many commodities, the cost of transport was a material factor in the eventual price of the goods, and the comparative cost of transport was, therefore, of much importance. He was interested to notice, on getting out the figures of the cost of transporting a ton weight from Buenos Aires to London as compared with the local cost of transporting by rail, that the highest and lowest costs to the company of shipping from Buenos Aires to London since last July had been 19s. and 15s. per ton. To move a ton of similar goods by rail from London to Brighton cost 44s. 11d., or from Lincoln to London 70s.

At the conclusion of the meeting the chairman made presentations to some twenty members of the staff who had been with the company since its formation in 1896.

Company Meeting**SELFRIDGE & CO., LTD.**

THE EIGHTEENTH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of Selfridge & Company, Ltd., was held on Thursday last at the Company's Store, Oxford Street, W.

The Chairman (Mr. H. Gordon Selfridge) said: At the close of our fiscal year on January 30 this house of business was 16 years 10½ months old, and these past fifty-two weeks have been a period of splendid progress and of development in practically every part of the business; and not only to this undertaking, but to the commerce of Great Britain as a whole have these months contributed their share of progress.

During the past year we have to our credit: The greatest annual returns and record returns in nearly every department; the greatest number of customers and individual transactions, the latter exceeding sometimes 200,000 in a day; the greatest amount of cash received; the greatest number of account customers and the greatest increase in the number; the greatest number of parcels delivered in town and country; the greatest number of letter orders received and fulfilled; the greatest number of employees on staff and, of course, the greatest amount paid out on pay-roll; the greatest number of times stock has turned; the greatest amount in cash paid out in expense, but the lowest cost per cent. for expense.

To touch on the balance-sheet in detail, we may point out that we are buying and cancelling the Debentures at the rate of £7,000 or more each year. The reserve is increased by the £50,000. The difference in amount reserved for taxation is explained by our change of method of striking a balance.

On the other side of the sheet an addition of £65,000 has been made to the first item—this being the balance of the cost of the building corner Oxford and Orchard Streets. We shall commence the erection of the middle building in Oxford Street within a few weeks, thus tying the two wings together and giving us a beautiful, unbroken facade over 500 ft. long and a dignified main entrance. The fixture account is only a little reduced although depreciated by £25,000, because of additions during the past year.

Investments which represent businesses which we have purchased and opened are worth fully the original amount of £725,000, but are now written down to £625,000.

We look upon those who have invested in the Preference and Preferred Ordinary Shares and in what is left of Debentures as partners in the business, and the payment of the dividends or interest is our first duty. Doubly do we feel this because of the great numbers of holders of such securities and the small average amount of each holding.

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**ENGLISH REVIEW**

March, 1926. 1/- net Monthly.

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**PEACE PROSPECTS IN THE COAL INDUSTRY** A NORTHUMBRIAN MINER  
**PARLIAMENT AND THE NATIONAL FINANCES** CAPT. R. C. BOURNE, M.P.  
**MAINTAINING SUPPLIES IN A GENERAL STRIKE**

Major-Gen. the Rt. Hon. THE EARL OF SCARBROUGH  
**"AS YOU WERE" AT OTTAWA**

FRANKLIN SIEVEWRIGHT PETERSON  
**AN INDEPENDENT POLICY IN CHINA** J. O. P. BLAND

**SEA POWER AND SUBMARINES** J. H. KIMBALL

**CAPTAIN SWILLWIND'S FAILURE** VACUUS VIATOR

**TOO MUCH SCHOOLING** E. T. GOOD

**THE VERY FIRST ZEPPELIN** FRANCIS GRIBBLE

**THE FUNCTION OF WORDS** PENRHYN CHAVE

**THE ANCIENT CARAVAN TRADE ROUTES** H. E. PHILLIPS

**HEALTH AND DIET**

The Rt. Hon. Sir RALPH S. PAGET, P.C.

**EXIT JOHN NASH** DERWENT MIAULL

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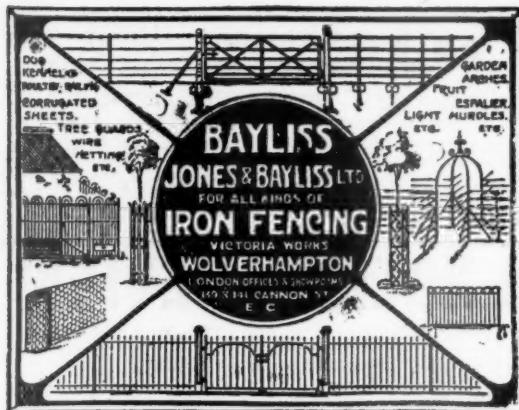
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